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Contrasts in Action: Maritime Taboos as a Social Factor

An Ethnoarchaeological Contribution to the Study of Maritime Cultures

Foreword

The knowledge and experiences supplied by maritime ethnography and archaeology are often rather neglected by general archaeology. Generally speaking, this has been the attitude of mainstream research towards maritime-based studies of nearly every age in the history of mankind. Only their significance for an understanding of the Mesolithic period is universally acknowledged. Owing to the the mobile nature of maritime activities, little interest is paid to maritime culture of later periods, and where it is mentioned it is regarded merely as an adjunct to the agricultural inland and understood as a culture controlled by the same conditions as the latter. Even efforts to come up with a specific definition of maritime culture are considered suspect.[1] On the other hand, maritime archaeology itself has largely neglected historical folklore as a source of interpretative possibilities.

In this text, I offer an entirely different perspective. I will endeavour to show that fundamental problems in archaeology can be explained by referring to relatively recent human experience of the sea, at sea and on the sea.[2] The title reveals the gist of my thesis: the contrasts between the two elements, sea and land. Some aspects of this topic have already been published,[3] and what remains at this stage is to convey the wealth of the related folkloristic material.

Although I have often referred to various studies in this connection, notably Solheim's *Nemningsfordommer ved fiske* (1940), I strongly doubt that any of my readers have actually bothered to read that doctoral thesis. The reasons may have had to do with language, since it was written in vernacular Norwegian (*nynorsk*, see below), but the chief obstacle has undoubtedly been the common disinclination for personal cross-disciplinary adventures.

I have been active as a maritime archaeologist since the 1970s. I have thus acquired fairly wide-ranging knowledge of historical aspects of maritime life. My main task as a maritime archaeologist has been to study the material remains of past maritime societies and draw conclusions from them. For a long time, the bulk of my work has been directed towards the materiality of ships and their landscapes. My basic material has been an extensive survey, carried out over a period of seven years (1975–1982), of the middle and northern east coast of Sweden from Norrtälje, north of Stockholm, to the Finnish border in the north. Earlier I also had some experience of conditions in and on the third largest lake of Europe, Vänern, in Western Sweden.[4] Interviews with maritime people constituted the most important aspect of the project.[5] During this process I invented and developed the term *maritime cultural landscape* to refer to this wealth of material found on land as well as under water.

In the 1990s, my interest began to shift in part to the minds of maritime people. I felt that their way of thinking was one of the salient aspects of the landscape, *the cognitive landscape*. To me what this means is simply how a person experiences and memorizes that landscape. This rapidly becomes part of one's mind. The Swedish ethnologist Orvar Löfgren aptly minted the memorable apposition *Man in landscape, landscape in man*.[6] Maritime life can indeed be referred to as a landscape. However, no anthropological literature on rituals (or even on taboos) actually offered any suitable parallel to this study. Early on, I looked for such parallels, but in vain.[7]

A sizeable proportion of prehistoric societies of the North consisted of people fishing and hunting in the sea and using islands and archipelagoes for various other purposes. Even the seemingly agrarian components had marine, ripuarian or limnic resources as one of their most vital ingredients, and not least of all as a constant and vital reserve in times of famine, which occurred often. It is only in recent centuries that overland roads have taken the place of the oceans and inland waterways for the purposes of mass transportation. Before that, the boat was truly the human being's most important material tool. Yet the human mind shaped not only the boat but also the cognitive landscape. This study focusses mainly on the nature of the cognitive landscape and how it came about. It is my conviction that the only way to learn more about it is to study expressions of landscape cognition and attitudes growing from it in recent times. That is what is meant by the term *ethnoarchaeology* in the title of this text.

With this text, my aim is to make my train of thought accessible not only to scholars but also to lay readers. This means that I follow my own traditions in writing. What you cannot make understandable to people in general is of no avail in the long run.

I myself have a vast wealth of interviews with living persons to draw on. The everlasting problem is that the first-hand character of this material was

completely lost in a devastating fire in my home in Örnsköldsvik, Northern Sweden, on 19 July 1983. Some 287 five and seven-inch tapes were lost, along with 24,000 slides, 11,000 black-and-white negatives and 4,000 books and files. Only my notes and my memories remain. Fortunately, I have quite a good memory for stories.

Introduction

The *anxiety-ritual theory* developed by the functionalist ethnographer Bronislaw Malinowski is commonly cited to explain the use of magic at sea.[8] Ritual and magic are logical cultural responses to potential mortal danger. The more danger, the more ritual. In more innocuous maritime occupations such as inshore fishing, magic plays a minor role by comparison. To substantiate his theory, Malinowski cites his field experience in the South Seas. In any risk-related business, it would be very important to ensure self-confidence in any task required. The Norwegian folklorist researcher Svale Solheim, whose work will figure prominently in the following, realized this elementary principle as far back as 1940, but he could not have avoided Malinowski's influence. In later years Malinowski's views have been referred to by several authors on the same general subject: fishermen's taboos.[9] We will return to this important issue at the end of this text.

Obviously, there are dangers involved in reducing the complexity of perceived trends within a rich display of expressions in any culture. The thesis I am presenting here, however, claims explicitly that such reduction is necessary if any advances are to be made in understanding cognition in maritime societies over the course of millennia. I will therefore maintain this line consistently, even though the matter would be vastly more complex if one were to take into consideration all of the alternative views – which in my opinion, however, are of merely secondary importance. What remains after such reduction is the basic opposition of sea and land. That, then, is my main contention.

I have also recently noted the uncontrollable otherness of the sea in another sense, by referring to the chronic mendacity of skipper stories and, to go very far back in time, in the stories of Odysseus.[10]

Most societies of the past were illiterate or, more precisely, did not use literacy to express their views and feelings. Nevertheless, I maintain, their cultural expression in connection with the landscape is – as also mirrored in fairly recent ethnographic material – inventive, wide-ranging and applying all senses. *Words*, *place names* and *speech* are essential, *their absence or prohibition* likewise meaningful, and *seeing, hearing and feeling* are inevitable mediums of cultural expression. Smelling and tasting, had it been possible to preserve them for posterity, could well have held similar significance.[11]

Naming prejudices and concomitant rituals experienced among fishermen and sailors in later centuries constitute the basis of the maritime-ethnoarchaeological study of the maritime cultural landscape. Most Scandinavians of today, even coast-dwellers, have no inkling of these conceptions, and if they have heard of them they normally would know nothing of their perseverance down to the present (or recent past). The best and most comprehensive work is thus a doctoral thesis in folkloristics by the Norwegian Svale Solheim: *Nemningsfordommer ved fiske* of the year 1940. Solheim was later appointed professor of folklore at the University of Bergen.

Yet Solheim did not deliver a summary in any major European language, as far as I know, nor was his work ever translated. As pointed out above, he wrote in *nynorsk*, the rural form of traditional Norwegian, and this may have created an obstacle even for a Nordic public. Nevertheless, his message should have rung out loud and clear. There is no doubt about the fact that his work was once read – or at least referred to – widely. Curiously enough, however, there are extremely few reviews of it, to say nothing of explicitly critical stances. So far, the only one I have found is that of Reidar Christiansen, published in the Swedish scholarly journal *Folkminnen och Folktankar* the following year, 1941. It seems, therefore, that I am meanwhile alone in my appreciation of its value in looking for explanations of prehistory. Yet there is no reason to doubt its reliability with regard to the extensive material. In the following, like Solheim himself, I will refer to some predecessors and contemporaries in the field.

Over the course of forty years of active research in archaeology and related diciplines, I have gathered a great wealth of material to back up my appreciation of this line of thought. Certain major problems of archaeological interpretation gradually crystallized, and I examined them from this perspective. As alrealdy mentioned, however, observations during *interviews* with literally thousands of maritime people in the North (1975–1982) constituted the most extensive material. Most of the evidence came in the form of fragments, allusions, hints and intimations. Only a very few instances of coherent and conscious "systems" were noted. In the years since 1975, I have also analysed types of *place names* as one way of gaining a better understanding of the cognitive landscape of the past.

Then, on a weekend in August 2004, while I was working on a study of seamen's baptisms at the offices of the county municipality in Kristiansand, Norway, the consequences of all this suddenly became obvious to me. Thanks to my vast background, my thoughts rapidly unfolded. In fact, the experience was something of a revelation.

To be able to use this complex more efficiently as an explanatory device, I shall now present a rather extensive summary of Solheim's book, after having mentioned only a few salient examples above. The book's sheer magni-

tude and diversity has never been satisfactorily discussed. Other important works concern place names, notably those of Jöran Sahlgren and Ivar Modéer, both Swedish linguists, and Per Hovda, a Norwegian counterpart.[12] The basic ideas of taboo and its applications at sea were already clear to Jöran Sahlgren, who in 1915 proposed the concept *noa* for euphemisms or replacements of different kinds in the context of name (and other) *taboos.*[13] A negligible part of his work has been translated in extenso or transmitted in other ways to an English (or other) readership. Another ingredient, the *baptism of sailors*, was, however, described and analysed in English in a doctoral thesis by the Danish ethnologist Henning Henningsen.[14] This is thus another source that bears citing here as a parallel complex, one closely related, in my view, to taboos and passage rites among fishermen.

A large proportion of the material thus falls in the interface between archaeology, folklore and linguistics. This interface, if not unknown, is marred by neglect. As pointed out above, maritime life in general is a sorely neglected field of study in general archaeology and the maritime variety of archaeology deals primarily with ships and ship construction of the past. Ideas about cognition at sea belong to other disciplines.[15]

The basic idea emerging from the study of ethnology and anthropology is that of *liminality*[16] (fig. 1). The Latin word *limen*, gen. *liminis*, simply means 'threshold', or, figuratively speaking, 'on the brink'. It is most often applied in the sense of a dividing line or area between two worlds, real or imagined. In some contexts, it can mean 'sacred', but the universal ambiguity of this concept can also signify something otherworldly, forbidden, and thus possibly *taboo.*

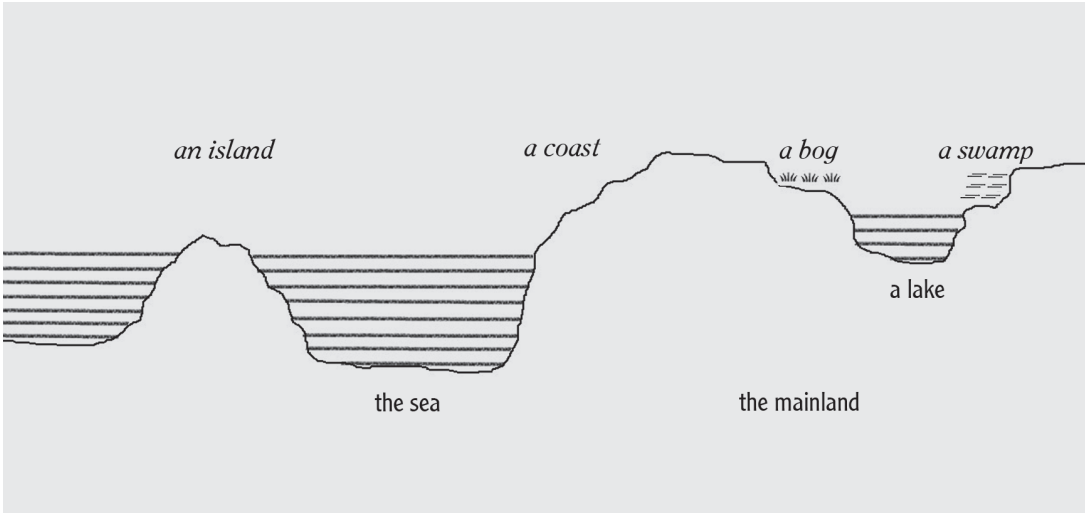

Fig. 1. Hydroliminality as a principle (liminal areas in italics). Liminality is also attained within the confines of a vessel. (Sketch: Christer Westerdahl/Erik Hoops)

In the understanding applied here, it boils down to the contrasts in the meeting of sea and land. You are in it as soon as you can *see* and *feel* the waters, following the entire range of the remaining senses – perhaps merely smelling the salt of the wind or hearing the seagulls hovering above you for the first time as you descend from the land. Yet the very waterline itself strengthens the charge of magic. The most charged place is that of *the boat*, floating on the water, where you feel the contrast most vividly. You are in another, moving, world. Thus, liminality means that you are on the brink to that world, and the area around you is ambiguous. Whatever you do, see or hear, could go any way, for better or for worse. The liminal state is thought of as exceedingly dangerous. Yet the correct approach to or negotiation of it, that is, according to the social norms for the concomitant rituals, can bring really good luck.

It is not immediately clear what this kind of liminality would mean in a prehistoric environment. Certainly I have already assumed that approximately the same dualism was applied in various guises diachronically. This assumption makes up the bulk of my work in this field. My main study area has been Fennoscandia, the Scandinavian peninsula with Finland and Denmark as parts of the mainland across the waters of the Baltic, or rather the Scando-Baltic area. Solheim (1940) also applied his study to the Atlantic islands, Iceland, the Faroes, Orkney and Shetland and parts of the mainland and the archipelagoes of Scotland. All belong to the area of onetime Norse influence. For this reason, it is not entirely wrong to talk of culture-specific beliefs.

Fig. 2. Elks carved on a rock at the waterline of Ånnsjön Lake, Jämtland, Sweden, close to the Norwegian border. Mesolithic Age. (Photo: Christer Westerdahl)

The life and beliefs of the first hunters and gatherers at the end of the last Ice Age were at the very root. It cannot be denied that magic must have been applied in every area of life in those times. According to the anthropological textbook by Keesing: "Magic … represents the human attempt to manipulate chains of cause and effect between events that to us are unrelated, in ways that to us are irrational."[17]

The cognitive and religious categories and taxonomies to which animals can be assigned are significant in all such societies.[18] The Mesolithic hunters' rock carvings (fig. 2) are located almost exclusively on the sea. The rock carvings of the Bronze Age (fig. 3) are undoubtedly based on diverse other religious ideas, but their location is to a large extent the same. I would therefore assume that the same mechanism of liminality of the shoreline was in force there. The urge to provide protection and luck, something good for the community and its individuals, is basic.

However, the luck or advantageous prospects could also be conferred to the deceased. The latter could be buried by the surviving society in such a liminal, transitional place as to be able to give them a good afterlife. It is to be assumed that this afterlife was imagined to take place somewhere across waters. During the Bronze Age, and to some extent also the Iron Age, the major complexes of burial cairns are found at the seaboard in the north, in many cases directly on the shore. In several areas, they are the only monumental burial sites. It should perhaps be pointed out right at the start that there are always exceptions, especially those inland and in the most heavily agrarian areas of the region of study, particularly in Denmark and southern Scandinavia, with its almost continental conditions.

I believe that, if for any reason the normal liminal brink was not accessible, it could be recreated by a vessel brought to land. Here I refer to *boat graves*, vessel forms laid out on the ground, *ship settings*, or the marking of a rock to sanctify it in the same way, as if it were at the water's edge or the waterline. This would be a contributory factor for the location of rock carvings (also depicting ships) found far from the sea. A kind of brinkmanship was reasonably also applied to those offerings to the gods and powers of prehistory carried out in wetlands. *Wetland offerings* are exceedingly common in all periods, although variations do occur. Offerings would also have been made in the sea, although the remains of such are hard to find. However, finds of Neolithic pottery in such locations, mostly shallow waters, have been preserved and identified.[19] A general explanatory category would then be *hydroliminality*[20] (cf. fig. 1).

The water is the border between the dead and the living. One of the most universal conceptions concerning the water's edge is *that souls cannot pass across the waters by themselves.*[21] Their burial rituals and their burial sites should then be carried out and located on the edge of waters, the seashore, or on an island in the sea or, inland, in a river or lake. Otherwise the souls of the

Fig. 3. Bronze-Age figures at Tanum, Bohuslän, Sweden. Originally they were close to the beach. They represent the later tradition of rock carvings in the North. (Photo: Christer Westerdahl)

dead might haunt the living. Their location at the water's edge could then be perceived as a form of protection for the living.

Bodies of water can thus also be seen as the border between two worlds. Souls can be helped to cross the border to the otherworld. One possibility is that the helper is *an animal* possessing otherwordly qualities, impossible to achieve by humans. Interestingly, a young Norwegian archaeologist[22] has found that some Iron Age graves in Northern Norway contain bones of animals that may have had that function. It is by no means a universal occurrence, even in that area, but all remains of animals hitherto found in these

graves – to the extent that they do not belong to domesticated species – are of *animals that break the water*. Most are seafowl, but whales, fishes and seals also occur. Two exceptions are noted, a bear and a gallinaceous bird species. Bears, for their part, would seem to cross this border in another way, by way of their escape to the underworld trance of hibernation, somewhat like a shaman. Graves that do not conform to this tendency may perhaps express a different cosmology; after all, the existence of more than one is only natural in the context of this crosscultural area.

In various cultures where formal religion has formulated related conceptions, the dead souls must pass over water (in the Zoroastrian version by way of a bridge, the *Cinvat*), be ferried across a stream (as in the Greek ferry of *Charon*), or transported by sea to the land of the dead (as in the western Celtic idea of the *Tír na nÓg*, the Land of Youth).

The very location of the grave at the waterside would thus to a certain extent have helped to dispatch the deceased across the border. The burial would be the focus of a ritual process also including various other ritual elements designed to ensure a speedy transfer. Cremation is relatively easy to explain along these lines, but inhumation is more problematic. However, corpses could be placed in such a way that was thought to prevent them from becoming revenants amongst the living. One possibility is what is known as the *crouched burial*, with bent knees and elbows; another is to place stones or other materials on the body soul, which is imagined as a visible corporeal being, to press it down into the ground. The German ethnographer Hermann Klaatsch once documented that this was the professed aim of a recent custom practised in parts of the Pacific.[23] Even the general design of the grave, cairns, barrows, and not least of all the curb stones or inner rings laid in a circle around the corpse may have served a related purpose.[24] Yet we can also be sure that other rituals to this elementary end accompanied the burial – rituals of which we have less evidence, if any.

The elementary fear of ghosts – of the "undead", of those who come to land as anonymous wreckage, of restless revenants, of those who were wicked and brutal during their lifetime, or those who were not interred with the proper ceremonies to dispatch them to the otherlands – is presumed here to have been active throughout known history. For one's own safety, one could exploit precisely the inability of souls to cross water.

At best, a burial could be carried out on an island[25] or perhaps another place which could be considered, or "made", an island conceptually. Man invented means of protection against those ghosts that could not be pacified or caught in the normal way. One such means, I imagine, was a stone maze. A recent text of mine studied the contexts of the symbol of the labyrinth *as applied to the coastal and archipelago mazes of the North*.[26]

Above I briefly mentioned ships brought to land across the land/sea border as materialized symbols of this significant transition. That phenomenon

will not be a topic of discussion in the following, but aspects of it have been brought up in previous texts of mine. As potential additional material I will refer only to votive model ships in churches or other communal places, processions of ships or ship models, and to some extent ship graffiti in holy places.[27]

In the following the emphasis will be strictly on folklore of recent centuries.

The work by Svale Solheim: A commentated summary

Solheim's study *Nemningsfordommer ved fiske* was published by the Norwegian Science Academy (Det Norske Videnskaps-Akademi) in Oslo in 1940.[28] You will note that that was the year Norway was occupied by Nazi Germany, beginning on 9 April.

Solheim is straightforward in his approach to the subject. It is the most detailed scrutiny of the subject that exists. Already the characterization in the title, which makes use of the Norwegian word for *prejudice* (*Nemningsfordommer*), reveals that he considered the reason for these prejudices to be more or less psychological in nature. This is the impression pointed out and criticized in a review by Reidar Christiansen written the following year.[29] Clearly Christiansen felt that Solheim was on the wrong track, but he failed to offer a different perspective. He was, incidentally, Solheim's predecessor as professor of folkloristics in Bergen, and perhaps felt that he had to take a critical scholarly stance for that reason alone.

On the other hand, a term such as *prejudice* (Norwegian and Danish *fordom*, Swedish *fördom*, German *Vorurteil*) would, for many empiricist readers, perhaps evoke the days in which discussion of such topics was generally dismissed as merely one more study of fishermen's superstitions and unworthy of further notice. This may also have something to do with the lack of interest accorded Solheim's work in disciplines other than folkloristics. In my opinion, and as I will explain in greater depth later, the taboos and their applications appear rather to be an expression of *a coherent system of belief*.

The complex of prejudices is astonishingly multifaceted. It should come as a revelation to those who think that such prejudices are limited to the presence of women on boats or the taboo on cats and priests.

The principle is that the normal name or word of a thing, the *land name* or *word*, if you will, was taboo on board and in connection with the sea. This word or name was then replaced by another in every situation on board. There could be many different possible replacements with a local or regional tinge. The forbidden phenomena were named by way of paraphrases. These euphemisms are sometimes called *noa* names, a Pacific Sea (New Zeeland Maori) term earlier introduced, as has been pointed out previously, by the

Swedish linguist Jöran Sahlgren for general linguistic use in 1915. But it is not used by Solheim, who prefers the Norwegian *godnemne*, 'good name', or perhaps 'good naming'. You can, so to speak, 'hide' behind it. This notion is expressed by another term in Norwegian: *løyndenamn*. The meaning of these terms is certainly more easily understood in the North than the strange, and to some extent ambiguous, *noa*.

However, *noa* is to be preferred here, since it is an easier term to use for an international English readership, as explained elsewhere. But then it need not only mean ingratiating names, euphemisms, but could also systematically be extended to refer to *any* replacement or alternative. For the sake of variation, however, I am going to use both. Sometimes I feel it is more interesting to talk about a *replacement (name* or *word)*, especially in cases where I do not know which name of a certain phenomenon is *taboo* and which is *noa*. Another possibility is *paraphrase* (or, indeed, *metaphor*) which gives a good description of the kind of words that are used.

Some of these paraphrases or euphemisms displayed a mastery of language and meanings approximating what Norse medieval poetry called *kennings*.[30] Among these words and expressions, there is a certain tendency to use prototypes or parallels in foreign languages. Perhaps the users thought that fish and hostile powers would not understand them? Solheim points out the deeply felt animosity among fishermen towards the authorities, and in general towards those who did not fish and were not exposed to the same dangers as they themselves. In Shetland, fishermen retained their old Norse words, probably in opposition to their new Scottish masters on land. The category classified as authorities were themselves the object of strong taboos. Other Shetland *noa* names were loanwords from, for example, Dutch.

In the seal-hunting terminology of the Swedish North, there are a few clear loanwords from Sami.[31] Seal-hunting is one of the maritime activities most prone to taboos of various kinds. It is thus likely that these words were taken over in this way, which is interesting in its own right, as it may indicate that the Sami were once seal hunters even on this, eastern (Baltic or Bothnian) side of the Scandinavian peninsula.[32] In Estonia, many names were adopted from Swedish-speaking maritime neighbours in the country. Thus it was believed by at least some people that the whole complex of maritime taboos among the Estonian-speakers was a product of contacts with the Swedish-speaking Runö (Estonian *Ruhnu*) islanders who were keen seal hunters.[33] If this survival – if that is what it should be called – is to be ascribed to influence from the Swedish-speaking Estonians, it may perhaps be explained by the old-fashioned maritime lifestyle of these coast-dwelling peasants in comparison with, for example, Sweden proper. There was no appreciable class distinction.

The vocabulary of replacement was so extensive that it was seen as a language of its own, a *sea language*. However, syntax was seldom affected. In

the Faroes, a distinction was made between *sjómali*, 'the sea dialect' or 'sea language', and the *sodnhusmali*, 'the language of the wash-house'. The latter term gives the metaphor of land a distinct domestic nuance.[34]

Solheim delivers a systematic source catalogue of the categories where naming prejudice is applied. The replacements, words or paraphrases are described. These categories are:

– *boat, tools and equipment*
– *fish*
– *domestic animals; house and home*
– *wild animals and scavengers*
– *birds*
– *the authorities*
– *celestial bodies and natural phenomena*
– *fishing grounds and sailing route*

The last category is not only the broadest, but also forms a comprehensive approach to an interpretation of cognition among sailors and the general maritime cultural landscape. It is based on the adaptation to landscape features in navigation by way of land contours and transit lines.

Material (interviews and records) collected on these categories is limited primarily to Norway and the Norse Atlantic, the Faroes, Shetland,[35] Orkney, Northern Scotland and islands such as the Hebrides to the northwest and, to some extent, Man in the Irish Sea.

Solheim's intention was to subject them to an analysis. He had himself recorded a sizeable amount of the Norwegian sources. Secondly, the searchlight, as you have already seen, passed over to the Baltic, Sweden, Estonia, and to some extent Finland and Denmark.

Yet if the material on a particular custom is unevenly distributed, or appears to be so, Solheim often assumes that if the custom can be shown to have been used in only one place it is likely to have been used in others as well within the orbit of Norse influence. I consider this assumption extremely probable, since, as mentioned, I have made observations in other areas where a number of customs recorded in Solheim's nuclear area were unknown before my visits. With some confidence, I can say for myself that I have found parallels in Northern Sweden, albeit fairly isolated, to almost all categories and details listed by Solheim for Norway. Strikingly, the lacunae or missing records he pointed out often concern his nuclear area and he thus illustrates by citing other areas of the North. The fact that the perseverance of beliefs appears to be the strongest in Norway can easily be explained by the theory of anxiety-magic as proposed by Malinowski in 1948 and much earlier. Reasonably, the exposure to the open sea on the North Atlantic would have been felt, at least cognitively, strongest along the rocky coast of Norway, the western part of the Scandinavian peninsula, where maritime pursuits were

much more dominant than on the eastern part (facing the Baltic), although the latter were by no means negligible in this sense.

Yet much the same – in fact almost identical – material is indeed found when we take a closer look at notes and interviews of a most dispersed character in and around the Baltic, Sweden, Finland, especially Ostrobothnia (Österbotten), Gotland, and to a lesser degree Denmark. An apparently coherent system of most striking parallels to the western genuinely Norse world is offered by comprehensive material published by Oskar Loorits in Estonia and Livonia.[36] Before Solheim's work, parts of this source had been translated from Estonian to Norwegian for the benefit of comparison. In the material known through these sources, there is thus a definite concentration on the Northern Germanic linguistic sphere, but there is rich variety in the phenomenon of naming prejudice as well among neighbours, for example the Fenno-Ougrian speakers, Finns, Estonians and Livonians (the last-named language is practically extinct today). For this reason, I doubt that the phenomenon is strictly culture-specific.

As far as we know, there are indeed some striking resemblances in other maritime societies of the world. Yet anyone who believes that there is a system universally permeating maritime life may be disappointed by the instances occurring elsewhere, as they seem rather fragmentary in comparison with the Northern European material. Even though the prejudices recorded in Texas in a doctoral thesis by Patrick Mullen[37] can be explained by ideas of immigrants from Northern Europe, a related mechanism is found as well in Asia among Malay fishermen in recent times[38] and among Indians in Guyana in Latin America during the eighteenth century.[39]

The present obvious concentration of the known material on Northern Europe may therefore be just an illusion. As for myself, my intuition tells me that the Mediterranean, for example, must once have had similar conceptions. I have in the past suggested that the collectors of folk traditions in the North may have had a different – and closer – social relationship to fishing folk and fishing communities than researchers in the South. Hierarchical society, combined with the prestige of men of science, as well as class distinctions and social prejudices towards lowly fishermen, are definitely not restricted to that area – that is, the Mediterranean region – but slightly different attitudes may have had fatal consequences in this regard.[40] However, it may be just a lack of knowledge of the Mediterranean on our (northern) part. The publication of this or other works can perhaps contribute to rounding out the picture.

Be that as it may, historical sources that mention naming prejudice among fishermen in Norway appear at a rather late date. One of the oldest notes is found in the work of Hans Strøm for Sundmøre in 1762.[41] Other information is found in the works of Eilert Sundt, a pioneer sociologist, in 1852.[42] It was not until the first half of the last century that systematic searches got

underway. On the other hand, other sources which will be quoted below to support conjectures of a close connection between the world of fishermen and that of sailors go back to the sixteenth century, and revolve around the baptism of sailors (first mentioned in AD 1539), the *noa* names of *Kullen* in Skåne, the southernmost part of Sweden (late sixteenth century), etc. Those are the earliest literary sources of this kind in the main part of the North, but that does not mean that the conceptions involved do not go back at least as far as the Middle Ages. It appears that the transition from a taboo name to a *noa* name can also be reversed, so that the current *noa* name becomes taboo and a new *noa* name is introduced and so on. In the case of Kullen, it may be that this process can be substantiated several consecutive times, possibly back to prehistoric days; more on that below.

Let us continue here with our summary and selective exposition of Solheim's material and views. Comments will, however, be incorporated in my thesis as a whole, which may sometimes make it difficult to see where his material ends and where another may complement or correct it. I hope I have made these distinctions clear.

Some elementary rules apply to the consequences of violating the unwritten laws of *taboo*. If a novice among the fishermen forgot to apply the renaming principles during a sea passage, various forms of punishment would be applied. The danger at first had to be averted by means of the mention or the seizing of the 'cold iron' in the form of a knife, or the sign of the cross, or the mention of 'cross'. Then fines could be meted out as an atonement, or the unlucky novice may have been symbolically baptized. On sailing ships this was known as *han(d)se*, to which ceremony we will return. As Solheim points out,[43] *the customs of fishermen were generally the same as those of the sailors.* But the origins were certainly in the fishing context. In my opinion, fishing is at the very nucleus of all truly maritime culture.

In the late days, when the customs were gradually disappearing, the atonements were largely symbolic, and applied humorously. Yet it is obvious that remains of a harsher reality existed. From Pärnu in Estonia, we have evidence of keel-hauling and flogging taking place within living memory of persons interviewed in the 1930s.[44]

Astonishing details were mentioned from the large lake of Peipsi in Estonia. Interestingly, the mention of the land names of wild animals on land were *graded*, so that, for example, mention of the lion using the normal land name was the most serious offence. It earned the offender 50 blows with a leather glove, followed by the same offence concerning the bear (25), the elk (20) and the hare (15). The lion is of course irrelevant in this environment, but the others seem to bear some influence from hunting taboos. Loorits indicates clearly that there is a similar Estonian naming prejudice for fishing as well as for hunting. In inland Finland, likewise Fenno-Ougrian-speaking, the

taboos revolved around passages in dangerous places, often bearing names with the prefix *Pyhä-*, 'sacred', 'forbidden',[45] and especially around hunting magic, above all concerning the brown bear.[46] This contrasts sharply with the coastline of Finland, which was often settled by Swedish-speaking fishermen-farmers and seal hunters where the cognitive interest was directed purely towards the maritime world.

As a further means of determining whether there was such a gradation of danger, we have recourse only to the recorded *numbers* of possible *noa* names for each species. However, this may not be relevant, since certain of these species may offer more generous angles to supply paraphrases. Besides, traditional knowledge tends to be collected rather haphazardly, especially in the case of words or names – unless for strictly lexicographical purposes.

Boat, tools and equipment

The taboos with regard to the boat could involve avoiding reference to certain wood species, e.g. the rowan, *Sorbus aucuparia*, used in boatbuilding. However, open mention of a particular sub-species of this wood was advantageous, possibly because of an observed resemblance between its Norwegian name, *flogrønn*, and the ability of a boat to take the oncoming waves, the *flog*. Another prejudice was directed towards branches which had grown in the wood used for strakes. They would have to be replaced by wooden plugs. These are merely a few examples pertaining to the construction of boats; the list could certainly be extended substantially.[47]

Using the normal word for a boat was taboo, as was mention of the usual words for a boat trip or passage. In the Shetlands, at least six *noa* names are known for the boat.

Giving a vessel an individual name was, as we know, another highly meaningful event, at which an offering was made to it in the form of liquids, mostly alcoholic. This act could have a trace of an apotropaeic purpose.

To mention various parts of the boat with the usual terms was taboo. It was a bad idea to let outsiders touch – or even just see – the implements used in fishing and thereby to influence their performance. It was important to use *noa* names for these implements on board as well. The fishing hook had six different names in Shetland. Replacement words were also used for a variety of other tools, such as the indispensable knife or the typical *vabein*, an object which, made of horn or bone, was mounted on the gunwale and served as a guide for the fishing line. This *vabein* may have been an original *noa* name, as Solheim assumes. It could also be called *trehest* or *linemerr*, interestingly referring to a horse, *hest*, *merr*, or 'virgin,' *jomfru*, both terms or associations recurring in many maritime situations, as place names or designations of other kinds. As we will see, if a certain phenomenon such as the horse or the virgin was taboo in particularly important maritime connections, it would

presumably proliferate as either taboo or *noa* in almost all possible contexts (perhaps even some on land).

The same rules applied to the crews, their individual names, the clothes they used at sea and the fires they lit on board to cook food. Fire had twelve replacement words in Shetland.

On board the vessel, one was obliged, of course, to talk as little as possible.

Fish

Even on lakes, the regular names of fish species were among the most common tabooed words. In Finland there were sayings such as "the lake does not like the naming of fish", or "the fish runs away when it hears its name".[48] This is thus the opposite of what is expected from dangerous animals (wolf, bear, etc.). If you named them with the normal word you would soon feel their presence. Their normal names were therefore taboo.

The most important fish species in folklore was the *halibut*, Norwegian *kveite*, Swedish *hälleflundra*. In Norse it was also called *heilagr fiskr*, the 'sacred fish', in earlier times. The latter designation – including the prefix *helghe-*, 'holy', in 'hälleflundra,' the regular Swedish name for the species – reveals that it was considered holy, or sacred. Certain scholars of fish nomenclature have indicated that this may have had something to do with its use during Lent in periods where Catholicism was practised in the North. In those times, it was undoubtedly exported to Europe from Norway and other regions in Scandinavia. *Yet that was true of several other species as well, in fact even more so.*

The rules of Lent (the fast) were strictly enforced in the Church during the Lateran Council from AD 1215 onward, which would mean that such a cognitive role for the halibut would not have originated before the High or Late Middle Ages.

However, the majority of the evidence points instead to a fundamental tradition dating back to prehistoric times. Depictions of halibuts are known from several important Mesolithic rock carvings.[49] Some depict fishing from a boat. The most striking of the others is a half-moon of twelve halibuts swimming in parallel, found on a single rock in Kvennevika in Nord-Trøndelag, Central Norway.[50]

Most interestingly, it was forbidden to break, cut or burn the bones of this fish species. This is strikingly similar, as Solheim comments, to the attitude of hunting peoples around the world towards their best animals of prey. Much closer to the coastal dwellers, Sami reindeer breeders applied the same taboo to their slaughtered reindeers, as well as to the bones and skeleton left over from the ceremonial bear-hunt in recent times.[51]

There is certainly something rather special about the halibut in recent times. Before fishing the *kveite*, some fishermen used to dress in their best

clothes, to be able to call properly on *jomfrua* ('the virgin'). Thus, once again we can see the 'virgin' in a symbolic disguise. The first fish caught every year was to be sent back into the sea, but its blood and heart were consumed, seemingly to acquire rare qualities. With its blood, a cross was painted on the white side of the fish. Only a few people could possess *kveitelukka*, 'halibut luck' – that is, the ability to catch large quantities of halibut.

Unusually rich customs and beliefs are thus bound up with this great fish. Apart from being the best food, it could occur at a weight of up to 300 kg, about the weight of the flesh of a large land animal.

There are of course a number of *noa* names for the halibut, usually – as already indicated – of female gender, for example *jomfrua*, *prinsessa*, *frua*, *abbeluna*, etc. At least eight such names are known from Shetland. In Estonia, the halibut could be called *lest*, which means 'the flat one'.[52]

When it comes to fish species other than the halibut, there is more material on taboos from outside Norway, but naming prejudice exists for most even inside this country.

Another example is the *cod* on the Swedish island of Gotland, clearly furnished with some ingratiating *noa* names, but most remarkably also with the same *noa* name as that of the wolf. For this species of fish, there were six names on Shetland. In Estonia it is represented by names whose English equivalents would be 'idler' and 'tramp', revealing that fishermen likened it to migrating fish such as eel and salmon. These meanings recur in several other areas.

Salmon, however, was a fish referred to in Norway with exceedingly laudatory names such as *generalen*, *kongen* ('the general', 'the king'), etc. *Eels*, on the other hand, were likened to snakes and in various places were sometimes thought to belong to the devil. *Ling* had six *noa* names in Shetland. *Saithe* had three; in Norway, for example, it could be *Lars* or *Grå-Lars*, the latter referring to its grey colour. We will return to the colour grey; in this particular case, however, no special significance can be deduced from its use.

Precious little material has come down to us on several of the most useful food fishes. Herring is one example. There seems to be little to find on traditions related to herring and its nomenclature, except that it could have a general name, such as 'fish', *fisk*, or was called *merehulgus*, 'the sea tramp', during the fishing process in Estonia, somewhat similarly to other wandering fish such as cod. This can be explained in both cases by the fact that these species occur in schools, are caught in large nets, and were seldom dealt with individually.

In fact, most fish were evidently taken seriously in magic cognition only when individualized in fishing. This is a reasonable supposition in other cases as well, especially that of the halibut. The naming of the school fish mackerel by its land name was apparently taboo in the usual way only in Shetland.

Most fish species had several names, not only in Norway.[53] These various names may appear to be no more than local, or dialectal, ones, and that is evidently the prevailing explanation among linguists. On the other hand, it cannot be ruled out that some of these names were originally *noa* names. In some cases, such a reason for the variation may be obvious. However, the same variation is also found among the names of various land plants and birds, for which the need for tabooing is not as strong, although it certainly may exist in exceptional cases.[54]

Even for the types of small fish used as bait for larger fish, *noa* names have been found to be quite common. It was recorded in 1884 that fishermen on board vessels on the huge Lake Vänern in Sweden referred only to the *roach*, which was normally called *mört*, as well as *skomakare*, 'shoemaker', 'cobbler'. The more substantial and very popular *perch*, or *abborre*, was called *skräddare*, 'tailor'.[55] This gives rise to deliberations on my part suitable for combining several strands of maritime life. *Skomakaren* and *Skräddaren* are found all over the archipelago maps as place names of smaller skerries or holms,[56] offering, at first sight, nothing other than straightforward reference to a craftsman. The older Swedish word for a shoemaker is *sutare*, which in fact is also the designation for another freshwater fish. This title recurs on the large island *Suutari*, in Finnish form, in Norrbotten, in the very north of Sweden, where a fishing camp was established during the fifteenth century, if not earlier. Maybe these are cases of magic place names? Below we will see examples of a ritual performed at sites thus named.

Solheim points out, on the other hand, that there are quite a number of names for *ufisk*, fish that scare other fishes, those thought to be poisonous or inedible for other reasons, etc.

Domestic animals; house and home

This is obviously a very important part of the complex of naming prejudices. The fishermen were at the same time small-scale farmers and thus led a double life. Their other half was on land. Yet the opposition between sea and land (my interpretation) was felt at sea *as if they were in quite another world*, as Solheim comments (also see below). This is precisely my point: the otherness of the ocean.

Some land animals are well-known to be dangerous at sea. Among the taboos for domestic animals, the Norwegian author Strøm already referred to above, writing in 1762, mentions *horse*, *cow*, *goat* and *swine*. The Lofoten fishers were particularly reluctant to name *any kind of clawed animals*, for example the *cat*, *dog*, *bear* or *wolf*. Yet there was apparently no distinction between wild or tame clawed animals. Birds were rather common among them, some of them excessively so, for example the *crow*. One *noa* name for the eagle was *jana*.

The goat was *skind*, or *hornskorre*, the sheep *snauskolt*, the swine *roskate*, the horse *firføtting*, the cow *sihale*, and both of the two last-named could also be called *langerumpa*. However, not only domestic animals were taboo; the naming prejudice applied to *all kinds of land animals*. Anything that referred to them or could be associated with them was also taboo.

The *horse* was extremely common as a tabooed animal, in certain places the only recorded one. In Shetland there were eighteen sea names for the horse, some of them Norse, but among them there also seem to have been a few loanwords from Dutch and Low German. Anything that could be associated with horses, such as a drive, a ride, etc. was also taboo to mention. Naming the horse-dealer with the usual word was likewise forbidden. Solheim claims that there is no record of this from Sweden or Finland. That may have been true in 1940, but to me it is quite obvious that this claim would be incorrect even today or in the recent past as far as parts of the Bothnian Sea are concerned. Yet one instance of taboos on horses that may be hard to refute entirely is the prejudice generally applied to them, e.g. to the killing of old, decrepit horses. To prevent anyone from being blamed for their death, they were often chased down precipitous cliffs, or the task was deferred to despised sociocultural groups, Lapps – so-called parish Lapps, Swedish *sockenlappar* –, or professions such as executioners, *bödlar*. Another traditionally cited motif is the use of horse meat in heathen ceremonies.[57] I myself find this rather doubtful. There is such a wealth of maritime metaphors involving the horse that might have no connection with such origins. Horace Beck provides some examples,[58] starting with the following:

> For some reason, horses have been prominent in the minds of seamen for a long time. All along the coasts of the British Isles, Ireland and North America we find White Horse, Horse, Black Horse and Colt Island as well as many bluffs or headlands incorporating the word. Moreover, a number of items aboard ships bore names that included 'horse' or had something to do with horses …

We will return later to the horse in maritime life, both as a metaphor and in its role in naming the maritime landscape. The use of the horse in rituals could bring luck in matters maritime, as is the case with many other tabooed living creatures and phenomena.[59]

We have mentioned the *cow* before. Anything associated with this animal is also taboo. The cow was the most fundamental of all domestic animals. This is especially true of the Northern cultures, which for climatic reasons favoured dairy produce over other forms of agriculture. Solheim claims that a reason for this taboo cited among fishermen in Fauske, Nordland, Northern Norway was simply that nothing dangerous should be able to threaten their cattle. The prejudice is known to have occurred on some of the Atlantic

islands, with seven documented *noa* words from Shetland, but supposedly not in Sweden or Finland. Once again, I must deny this on the basis of my own experience. However, as in most cases referred to by Solheim, both cow and *oxen* were taboo in Estonia. This undoubtedly also extends to the *bull*, although I know of no recorded instance.

An interesting fact noted by me is that ship names dating from high medieval times contain the normal word for cow, *ku (ko)*, as in *Rauðku*,[60] the equivalent of *Röde ko* or *Bunte ku* in Dutch or Low German, which is also found in maritime place names in Sweden. The same goes for other ship names referring to land animals, such as the ox (*Oxen*, *Uxinn*). Ship names are a category of great significance in magic thinking concerning the vagaries of the sea. We remember the ceremonial character of the baptism with the first naming of the ship in later times. It has certainly had counterparts in the past if we were using ethnographic material as an analogy.[61]

Of course, I have ascribed this to a mechanism proposed by myself, according to which tabooed names in fact *can* be used in a magically profitable manner precisely at sea in the same manner as the horse (more below).

The *sheep* is taboo, even in inland Sweden. In this case the *noa* name *sö(a)* is a dialectal form (regular Norwegian *sau*), while the commonly used word is *får*. There are eleven *noa* names for the sheep recorded in Shetland.

The *goat* was thought of as vermin, in contrast to other domestic animals, in spite of the fact that it was "the poor man's cow". As Solheim notes, they were thought to steal fish and other objects. Several *noa* names are known in Norway, such as *sag*, *skorhonn*, *hornskåra*, etc., with some other local variations.

The *swine* has been pointed out in particular as a taboo in the younger traditions. This also applies to its associated flesh, pork (all Nordic: *fläsk*). Rather astonishingly, many place names include the prefix *Fläsk-*. I find it highly unlikely that this is a Christian prejudice motivated by its use, like horse meat, in sacrificial contexts in pagan times. Thirteen *noa* or replacement names were found in Shetland. To encounter a swine on land meant bad luck. In Caithness, Scotland, it was called a *could-iron beastie*, which refers to the custom of averting the danger by calling for a cauld-iron after a transgression of the taboo, or, for example in Northumberland, *Tom*, *Dick* or even *priest* or *parson*, for whom the normal word was in fact also taboo, as we will see. Solheim ascribes some of the dissociation from swine to social reasons, since very few fishers would have been able to afford to eat pork.

The *dog* was known rather sparsely to be tabooed at sea, but in spite of its popularity as a domestic animal it may have been seen as noxious as well. In Shetland, five *noa* names were known, among them the obvious Norse *rakki*.

The *cat* was certainly seen as one of the primary clawed animals. In the Shetland vocabulary of Jakobsen, there are no fewer than twenty-two different *noa* names for the cat. Obviously, it is one of the most familiar clawed

animals. Like a priest, swine or woman, the cat was a bad thing to meet on the way to the boat, topped only by meeting a combination of these. The same conceptions are known also in sealing in Estonia.

It appears a bit curious that all ships, as a prescribed rule, had a (ship's) dog and a (ship's) cat on board, since according to other rules they were taboo there. Yet here we find yet another hint that taboos could perhaps be used to advantage if deliberately applied. Mice or rats (see below) were also a necessary complement to the two other necessary species on board, the cat and the dog. The cat was evidently so important for the identity of the ship compound that – at least in late medieval England – no ship would be considered deserted, even in a legal sense, if the cat was still on board.[62] Only if it had left was it possible to claim the ship as ownerless. The cat may thus have personified the spirit of the ship. Inside the ship, these animals were inherently favourable, despite the taboos surrounding them. In that sense, both the cat and the dog could be considered as liminal agents in the terminology I introduce.

Solheim probably overestimated the danger inherent in purportedly noxious animals, as one of his principal ideas is precisely that taboo mainly has to do with anything that is negative to fishing or to the land world of fishermen.

The *products of the household on land* were also taboo. Some examples are butter, in Norway called *mastefeitt*, in Shetland *kirna.* Later it was taboo to mention potatoes at sea, even if they were brought there. All the implements used in cultivation would also be in the forbidden sphere, as was also the case with domestic furniture.

The normal name for *the land* could be taboo. In Estonia, with its flatland copses, it was referred to with a word meaning 'shrubs'. In Norway and Shetland there were no forested areas on the coast and then words denoting 'turf' (in Shetland *blobelti*, *widdek*) would be 'land'. In Ostrobothnia, Finland, it was known as *halman* at sea, at least in 1772. It is perhaps the same word that you could use for *hall*, 'big boulder', or 'slab'. Evidently, this curious word alludes to the stone(s) on land. Among Finnish-speaking seal hunters the mainland could be called *Holtikko*, 'the firm', 'the stationary'.[63] This is an excellent illustration of the universally valid contrast between the moving boat and land!

Finally, in this chapter Solheim dealt with the danger of having women on board or meeting them on the road. It is true that the wife in the house, the children, the domestic implements, the farmhouses and anything to do with the production at home were indeed taboo. Solheim points out that the negative prejudice has often been understood to concern women generally. Yet this is not the case. Certain women were 'bad in meeting', *vonde i møte.* Yet there were also women who were in fact very advantageous because they

possessed a power not found in others. Some of these were old women. From my own experience of interviews, those affected were often the unmarried women who lived in a kind of social limbo, and lonely mothers, who were sometimes suspected by established housewives of sorcery and often called whores by them.[64] In Shetland there was a whole range of paraphrase names of women; other areas, such as Fife in Scotland, used words for old women, others such as Estonia, for young girls.

Yet this did not mean that you took them on board. However, in small-scale fishing in my survey areas (Norrland, Sweden) family fishing in pairs in a single boat was a common kind of social group. There was no question of not taking either the wife or any of the younger daughters along on board. They were needed in the household both on land and at sea. A prejudice towards women could only be a positive one: you got a better catch by having them on board. As far as I can see, the only coherent conceptions concerning the danger of having women on board pertain to sailing ships. But even there, the rule was never without exceptions. The Jonah in a crisis at sea would most often be a man.

Wild animals and scavengers

Among this category of tabooed animals, we find a number of *clawed animals*, predators and birds of prey. We have already mentioned the domestic cat. Other examples are the *wolf*, *bear*, *eagle* and *owl*. However, the *raven* and the *crow* are also implicated, perhaps to some extent in their roles as scavengers, but they fall into the next category: birds. Inevitably, there is little difference between the coast and inland in the attitudes towards these animals.

Solheim thinks that prejudice against the *bear* is to be explained by the danger of its appearance in cattle-breeding contexts. Most of this prejudice is found inland, but it also exists at the coast. According to the parson Peder Claussøn Friis, writing in ca. 1600, there were a lot of bears in Lofoten, where they tore down dried fish from the stands and were keen on train oil as well. This behaviour of the bear is known even further south in Norway. The *noa* names point out the dark colour of the bear or are to some extent ingratiating: *svarten*, *svartekaren*, *gofar*. Of course, no traditions of this kind are known from the islands in the West or from Scotland, where the bear disappeared very early on. On the other hand, many are known from Estonia, where the bear is referred to as 'the black fellow', identically with the Norwegian *noa* names. Taboos on bears are known above all from Finland or the Sami area in the very north of Scandinavia, where this is an inland phenomenon. Finland, however, is not part of Solheim's survey. I find it hard to believe that the origins of the bear taboos can be explained primarily by the fear of harm to domestic animals. In this case, we must assume roots far back in the hunting

worlds of prehistory. There is indeed a glorious tradition of the bear hunt and bear rituals in most of the northern Fenno-Ougrian world.[65]

The *wolf* is another feared predator with many alternative names in Norway and Sweden – names of an ingratiating type or pointing to its perilousness or its grey colour, *graabein*, *Gråfot*, *Gullfot*, *udyret*, and *styggen*, and *de grå*, 'the grey ones', to refer to them collectively. It should once again be pointed out that in general the colour grey is often a liminal colour in folklore, between black, which is land, and white, which is sea (also see below).

The wolf and bear alike are given *noa* names in Estonian tradition, names which, as noted before, are clearly loanwords or transformations of designations of the Swedish-speaking coastal dwellers in the country.

Prejudice against the *hare* is best known in Northern Scotland and Estonia. Concerning the hare and the *rabbit*, Solheim applies some of his favourite explanations: they are noxious animals, and what is more, there is a trace of class opposition in the attitude of the poor fishermen towards the rabbit, since hunting rights for it belonged exclusively to the lords.

Solheim also lists some *noa* names for *snakes* in Norway and Estonia. In Ostrobothnia, Finland, the snake was called *långpiskan*, literally 'the long whip', at sea in the eighteenth century. However, the snake is obviously an animal that, although feared, could be used magically for advantageous purposes in the house. To me, this may possibly be another example of the reversal of the dangerous power of tabooed phenomena, sometimes also by way of a cognitive transfer from land to sea or vice versa.

For the *otter*, nine sea names were known in Shetland. Unsurprisingly, Solheim ascribes this to its role as a competitor to the fishers themselves.

Mice and *rats* were of course seen as noxious animals. In Shetland no less than seventeen *noa* names were known for them at the beginning of last century. It may appear curious that the very sign of a seaworthy vessel, the rat, was thought of in this way. Above we have also mentioned the two other cognitively necessary animals on board, the cat and the dog.

Interestingly, in some places in Norway and Sweden alike, mice were thought to be sent from the sea to land at Michaelmass *by the mermaid* to destroy the harvest in the barns. Traditionally, the harvest was to be place in storage by this very date.

Birds

As we have stated above, birds of prey could be categorized as clawed animals, which were always taboo at sea. To some extent, birds other than those of prey were also scavengers. In Norwegian tradition, and also in interviews recorded by me from Northern Sweden, there was sometimes *a clear distinction between birds of the land and those of the sea. According to this tradition, only birds of the land were taboo in fishing.*

The *eagle* had several rather expressive names, given to it as if it were a female person, young or old, but also referring to it as a 'fluttering rag'.We have already mentioned *jana.* It seems to Solheim that its powerful claws were, by association, feared, on account of linguistic association with activities such as *to claw forth a storm or to fasten nets in the sea bottom.* However, to see it fly to sea in the same direction as the boat was considered a good sign. On the other hand, it should never approach the vessel. At the same time, the eagle is the upper-class bird, the king of the birds, and in that connection called forth negative associations with its human counterparts on land.

Ordinary people seem to have been more interested in the taboos concerning the *raven*, Norwegian and Danish *ravn*, Swedish *korp*. It is a scavenger and a bird of death. It is perhaps more curious that the crow, *kråka*, associated with similar behaviour and portents, has such a strong position with regard to taboo, at least the same as that of the raven, and that it is distinguished by such an immense wealth of place names.

Taboos are traditionally known for *cormorants* and other fishermen's competitors – as Solheim elsewhere claims –, the *heron*, the *diver* and the *puffin.*

Finally, Solheim points out that *hens* are tabooed at sea, citing evidence from Shetland, with eleven *noa* names, and Estonia. Hens would rightly be categorized as belonging to the household, and can in no way be compared to fish-eaters or scavengers.

The authorities

This is a category of taboos that is dear to Solheim with his views on class society, where the fishermen are exploited by the upper classes. Authorities or powerful people in general are supposed to be dangerous and malevolent, especially those who deal directly with the fishers. Among them were *the parson*, who collected tithes, *the bailiff* and *the county sheriff*, who wanted taxes and different kinds of fees. They are generally seen as persons and institutions outside the working process of fishermen, and members of a different social milieu altogether.

Solheim submits these views with good reason. He quotes a series of striking proverbs that reflect common feelings about this state of affairs.

Reidar Christiansen – the reviewer of Solheim's book and at the same time his predecessor – rejects the idea[66] that earlier research had given the same explanation for many place names,[67] perhaps because he considered it prudent bourgeois. The animosity among fishermen towards the authorities and to some extent the people of the land, the land-lubbers, is well documented in the studies by the prominent maritime ethnologist Olof Hasslöf, who was himself a born to a family of professional fishermen in Bohuslän, Sweden.[68] I have met similarly strong attitudes in Northern Sweden and other places as well.

Strong taboos apply to *the church* and the *parson/priest*. This is one of the most important fields for the mechanism currently still in place both in Scandinavia and in the western islands, not least of all Shetland. The church building has to be named in another way. It was often the start of a transit line in navigation, so situations where its *noa* names had to be used were common. Chapels and churches with towers on the coast were known as highly efficient aids in any kind of navigation. Even tiny fisher chapels on low, wind-swept islands were important.[69]

Solheim quotes J.M. MacPherson on Orkney (1929): "The Orkney fisherman at sea carefully refrains from using the word church or kirk. He speaks of the heulie or buanhoos or bonehoos – the good or holy house." As Solheim correctly points out, while MacPherson interprets the *buanhoos* as a word derived from French *bon* (as in bonfire), it is obviously identical to Norse *bønhus*, 'the house of prayer'. In Shetland, one of its replacement words is *benhus.* This could perfectly suit another reasonable origin, 'the bonehouse', Norse *beinhus.* The same process applies to the parsonage. In Shetland it could be called *bjorg* at sea. And in Finland the church was sometimes called *tervaharju*, 'the one with the tarred roof ridge'.[70]

In Norway the priest had many other names based on his black gown. Solheim does not mention the fact that in taboo-making there is also a preoccupation with colour. *Black is the colour of the land, white that of the sea.* The liminal colour is a blend of the two, i.e. grey.

As I have indicated previously, this is a realization brought about by my own experiences. On the other hand, however, the explanation offered by Solheim in opposition to the idea that some kind of religion or magic is at the bottom of these customs cannot be correct. He states that the basic reason is that fishermen are afraid of the parson as they are afraid of any other phenomenon that could damage their work or catch. In my view, clergymen were also dangerous because they represented a power that could run counter to the fishermen's own beliefs. In Shetland, *noa* names for a parson are *beniman*, *hoidin*, *loder*, *predikanter*, *prestengolva*, *sjuski*, *søski* and *uppstander.*

Even other people associated with the church, such as the parish clerk, were taboo at sea.

To meet such people as the parson, etc. on the path to the boat was bad enough. In combination with another tabooed phenomenon – a woman or a cat – they could be disastrous. The fisherman could just as well turn right around and go home. And of course, none of these creatures should be on board, a tradition known all over the world.

God and the devil could, naturally, likewise not be mentioned. Solheim blames the specific teachings of the church for this. This is very doubtful, considering the fact that this taboo is a universal phenomenon, well known also from the gods of pagan religion in Scandinavia.[71] The replacement

words for the devil in Scotland are fairly well-known and worth quoting: *Auld Nick*, *Auld Sooty*, *Auld Clootie*, *Auld Uncle Geordie*, *The Deil*, *Auld Horny*, *The Auld Smith himself*. As can be seen, I maintain, there is an interesting trace here of the conception that black is a colour forbidden at sea, like what concerns the parson/priest generally.

The bailiff (*fut*, *fogde*) and the country sheriff (*lensmann*, *länsman)* were taboo at sea in Norwegian and Swedish coastal communities. It is all the more striking that the normal titles do occur quite often in place names of dangerous (and not so dangerous, my specific comment) rocks and skerries.[72] The reason for these seemingly paradoxical occurrences will be treated below, although Solheim's explanation is insufficient, as far as I can see. The country sheriff and his colleagues could – not just proverbially – be called "the wolves that walk on two legs". Any clerk who was well-versed in law and the writing of documents and engaged in dealings with fishermen could be described in the phrase: "Where the Devil is not found himself, he sends his Servants."

Celestial bodies and natural phenomena

There is no clear principle recorded on a taboo for this category. On the other hand, many *noa* names, often ingratiating, have been used at sea for many celestial bodies and other phenomena. The sun and the moon are important as time-counters. The moon and the stars offer opportunities for predictions on fishing, as well as being important in navigation. Much of this was based on traditional prophesies concerning fishing grounds, weather, wind, current, etc. Fishermen were careful to maintain an aura of mysticism around their knowledge. A rich store of natural markers only strengthened this aura of secretive wisdom. Probably this was one of several important ingredients in imparting traditional values to the novices.

Weather was generally not mentioned. Yet it was necessary to refer to the thunderstorm (*husbreia*, *gammelmor*, *blyslott*), during which it was supposed to be impossible to fish. A few place names referring to thunder could be found, clearly of magical value, for example *Hespriholmene* at Bømlo, Western Norway.[73] In one of the best paraphases, the wind was called *han beinlaus*, 'the boneless one'. A contrary headwind could be called *nakkabyr*, 'the wind against the back of your head', while rowing. These are two of the most striking parallels to the best Old Norse *kennings*. Winds were often personified as males, at the same time giving the direction from which they blow: *Austbottning*, *Vesterkal'n*, *Dalbon* on Lake Vänern.[74] In Livonian tradition, the winds from land could not be mentioned, since they always came from the east and a storm from this direction would drive fishermen seaward.

Other *noa* words were invented for *whirlwinds*, *fog*, *rain*, *snow*, *frost*, etc. Especially elaborate terminology was invented for *wave action*, especially

used in critical moments at a landfall. Some of it had a ritual tinge; some was based on sound empirical knowledge.

Fishing grounds and sailing routes

This is probably by far the largest category of regular taboo and *noa* names.

It was taboo to mention the sea itself, as well as the land and the bottom of the sea. "But the sea and the bottom unite in the mind of the fishermen and the naming of them goes together."[75] Formations on the sea bottom were as well-known as the coastal landscape above water. The sea could be likened with a great blue bog or wetland, *Blåmyra*, *Store-Myra*. A curious phenomenon is that, among the inland Sami, an opposite naming principle was applied: great wetlands were called *áhpe*, normally a word denoting the ocean and derived from the Norse *haf*, *hav*, for 'sea'.[76]

Another possibility is the reference to the Holy Virgin, thus again a reference of the maritime kind to a 'virgin'. MacGregor calls it, from Scottish tradition, "Mary's Storehouse",[77] and another source[78] mentions "the sea, upon whose gifts all depend more or less, is the treasury of Mary". In the North, identical expressions were used, for example *Jungfru Marie visthusbod* ('storehouse') in Swedish.[79]

Solheim explains this conception by citing the power of the Catholic Church and the ownership rights of churches and monasteries to fish and fishing grounds. This seems to me to be a rather simplistic view, but as we have seen before, only natural in the case of Solheim. The Virgin Mary was considered the foremost protector of fishermen. I would understand the expression or *noa* name as a device giving permission to harvest that storehouse by humbly recognizing less the ownership than the mastery of the Virgin. At any rate, these are Catholic expressions, and the North ceased to be a part of Catholic Europe before the middle of the sixteenth century.

Besides, there are other important aspects. As we will see below, names referring to a Virgin (*Jungfru-*, *Jomfru-*) are common in the North. Some of them, however, do not denote the Mother of God, but clearly point to the fickle mermaid, Swedish *sjöjungfru*, Danish *havfrue*.

Solheim reminds us that other paraphrases were used to describe drowning at sea, but these will not be quoted here. This manner of death is of course fundamentally sensitive in the dangerous life of a fisherman.

Solheim emphasizes the fundamental importance of land formations in navigation. The transit line, *med*, *me* or *mej*, and in the Orkneys *the meeth*, 'the spot', drawn between various such formations were the bases of finding one's fishing grounds, the knowledge of which should never pass to a stranger. Naming them was a sensitive business. Since they had to be kept secret, the process could lead to invented names which were kept in formu-

las describing the *med*. Gradually this formula was itself called a *med* and sometimes written down in notebooks called *mebøker* or *skallbøker. Skall* is a Norse term for the precise location of the fishing ground itself. Their use is attested to not only in Norway but also in Western Sweden. However, most of them have been destroyed, and those that have survived are related not to fishing grounds but to the locations of seamarks for the purpose of their maintenance.

However, the text of a preserved *mebok* from Halland, Sweden, dating from AD 1828, has been printed by Sandklef.[80] It lists thirty-six fishing sites, of which one is "empty" (without name), and none of which could be located on a sea chart in recent times. This is in no way surprising, in view of the secret knowledge implied. I myself would consider the existence of other *meböcker* partly to be a myth, since fishermen seldom entrusted anything to paper and were ashamed to do so. They memorized formulas in their heads. The myth of the *meböcker*, at least on Lake Vänern, was presumably designed to mystify outsiders and to hide the fact that this was knowledge entrusted only to memory and recited only on rare occasions.[81]

Thus, even if such a notebook of the Halland kind were to be found by a stranger, he could not easily identify the names given there. Symptomatically, Solheim was unable to find many good examples but does cite one from Stad in Western Norway, between Sogn og Fjordane (Nordfjord) and Sunnmøre, where it is still possible to identify the *med.* Often high mountains were parts of a *med*. They could be situated far away inside the fjords. As we know, churches could be used as seamarks, but they also served as starting points for going to a *med*. Many of these formations or sighting points were already taboo in some way or other. But now an additional complication would be the need for camouflage in relation to a *med*. According to Solheim, the names of fishing grounds were given exceedingly often in relation to the most important sighting point in the *med.* Jakobsen[82] confirms the established use of other than the normal names for landmarks in Shetland. "The tabooed names most often contained words which denote the appearance of the landmarks, that is, *how they appear when they are observed from the med*" (my italics). Hugh Marwick[83] informs us that: "In Birsa [north-west of the mainland], fishermen use the word *bairn* in the sense of 'little hill', in opposition to *hog*, 'larger hill' [from Old Norse *haugr*, a hill]. It is, however, almost only at sea that these names are used, when the fishermen, seeking a fishing mark, bring hills into a certain position relative to each other in order to fix the spot [*meeth;* here again the italics are mine]." *Noa* names are known to be applied at many other places. Another type of taboo for useful landmarks identical to the other mentioned has been documented from Jersey in the English Channel.[84]

Solheim finds it difficult to decide whether the danger of approaching certain islands or coasts or *any other practical consideration* is at the root of us-

ing *noa* names for them. This is, according to my own philosophy, a doubtful alternative, since it is not clear whether either danger or so-called practical considerations were *always* the reason for *noa* names.

Furthermore, Solheim mentions that the Flannan Islands northwest of Lewis in the Hebrides were called *North Hunters* or *The Seven Hunters* and *the Seven Haley Isles*.[85] While there, bird catchers and other users had to call it *the country.* St. Kilda was called *the high country.*[86] An identical *noa* name for the diabase (dolerite) mountain of Halleberg on Lake Vänern is *Höga Landet*, but it could also simply be called *Hall.*[87] Finally, the small island Eigg in the Inner Hebrides could be called *(Island) Nim-Ban-More*, Gaelic for 'the island of big women',[88] and its neighbour Canna had, as another name, *Tarsin.*[89]

Solheim here also mentions, somewhat unsystematically in this case, that windmills serving as landmarks often had *noa* names among sailors during passage. In Vendsyssel and Samsø in Northern Denmark they were all called *trintel* (or *trindel*). In 1804 it was recorded from Bornholm that windmills at sea could also be called *Thrønta*.[90] We will return to this subject when dealing with the sailor's baptism.

The preserved knowledge of such taboos is fragmentary and has come down to us only in short notes. Some of them have been mentioned, and to some extent they were quoted by Solheim. Yet some important additions are made here by myself.

A few of the places of concern here are justly famous and have been referred to by many authors. Foremost are *Blå Jungfrun* (fig. 4) and *Kullen* (fig.

Fig. 4. Blå Jungfrun, 'Blue Mermaid' or 'Blue Virgin', the magic island of Kalmarsund, between the Eastern Swedish mainland and Öland, where according to Olaus Magnus, writing in 1555, offerings were made. Maritime-type baptisms may well have taken place here, although there is no evidence to prove it. The island is moreover a good example of the taboo of place names. Blå Jungfrun is a *noa* name, replacing Blåkulla, the traditional name for the meeting places of witches at several sites of supreme maritime significance as route and land marks in Scandinavia. (Photo: Christer Westerdahl)

5) in Skåne, both prominent maritime natural features in Sweden. The first, Blå Jungfrun, 'Blue Virgin', was described for the first time by the Swedish Catholic ethnographer Olaus Magnus in his *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus*, printed in Rome in AD 1555:[91]

> Moreover, a tall mountain rises near the northern coast of the island, which the common sailors, in order to shun an unlucky omen and storms at sea, call the Virgin. Those who spend a while in its haven have a habit of giving little presents to the girls, for instance, gloves, belts of silk, and such keepsakes, as a kind of friendly gift to conciliate them. They seem to think that the divinity of the mountain is not ungrateful, for an old tale recalls what happened once: a voice came down from above and someone who had given a present was ordered to change his anchorage to avoid running into danger; by doing this he remained unhurt when others were wrecked. It is said that at certain seasons of the year a coven of northern witches assembles on this mountain to try out their spells. Any who comes at all late to this devil-worship undergoes a dreadful chastising; but in these matters it is better to follow one's belief, rather than people's assertions.

It is obvious that a Catholic cleric like Olaus Magnus does not confuse this Virgin with the Virgin Mary. This Virgin is identical to the mermaid, the personified female gender symbolizing the sea itself. The name that was to be avoided was *Blåkulla*, 'blue hill'; the traditional name for the meeting place of the witches. In this case, Sahlgren tidied up among the early sources in an excellent way.[92] In his dedication of 1622 in *Vitis aqvilonia*, on Nordic saints, the exiled Swedish Catholic Johannes Vastovius writes: "et ne Gothico Oceano suus deesset Neptunus, ignoti nominis virgini de Blakulla, ventorum ac maris imperium concessit, antiquitas." ("In order not to let the Gothic Ocean [the Baltic] lack its Neptune, our ancestors ascribed to a nameless virgin from Blåkulla the mastery of the waves and the winds.")[93]

The name *Blåkulla* is not restricted to Blå Jungfrun. It is found in many other places in the North. One such place is Bohuslän, where the regular name is Brattön. There it denotes the very top of the magic island, which can be seen far out at sea as an important landmark. There are several places called *Blaakollen* and *Blaakoll* in Norway, *Blaabjerg* in Denmark. Some of them have well-known alternative names, thus probably *noa* names. It has, however, for the most part been accepted that they derived their names from Blå Jungfrun. That seems to be the most famous place with this name. Thus it appears to be a migratory name. I myself doubt that this is correct. Identical conceptions in the North on the magic meaning of the colour "blue" in this context would be as likely an explanation. We will return to this mean-

ing in connection with stone mazes. Moreover, the many *Jungfrun* names will be treated further below.

The taboo on Blå Jungfrun is also mentioned in another famous source, the diary written by the famous botanist and traveller Carolus Linnaeus, who passed the island at sea in considerable danger in 1745: "Medan siöfolket berättade, at man ei borde kalla det Blåkulla, utan Kiänni(n)gen eller Jungfrun, ty annars uptändes storm och man kommo i lifsfara, begynte nordan kasta wågarna och en bestickande storm at stielpa båten …" ("While the sailors told us that you should not call it Blåkulla, but Kiänningen or Jungfrun, lest a storm would rise up and you would be in mortal danger, a northerly wind started up the waves and a rising storm began to capsize the boat.")[94]

The second is thus Kullen in Skåne, the prominent rocky point at the entrance to the Sound (fig. 5). Its *noa* name *Kulde-boenden*, 'the Kullen farmer', is mentioned as early as 1590, although not as such, only as a normal place name, "itt stoert biergh, Kulde-boenden kallit" ("a big mountain called Kulde-boenden").[95] The first mention of the site as a place for baptism appears to be in 1612, as "The Peasant". In German it was known as "Der Bauer", accordingly in Dutch as "De Boer", in Portuguese as "O Labrador", etc. It was forbidden to mention its regular name, Kullen, at sea. As we can see in the footnote above, the Danish scholar Worm also mentioned it in 1645. After 1658, Skåne was a part of Sweden.

Fig. 5. The promontory of Kullen. This engraving depicts the cape as it appears en route to and from the Sound, and the Sound customs at Helsingør, where Kullen is the roundest. This is where the baptism presumably took place. As Dutch and Low German sailors put it: "Vor dem rund, water in mund" ("Before the round, water in the mouth"). (From the travel journal of the Dutchman Anthonis Goeteeris, 1619)

Yet here we can discern an original name that was presumably taboo and later replaced and forgotten entirely. According to the linguist Karl-Gustaf Ljunggren, a remnant is found in the name of the large bay *Skälderviken* between Kullen and Hovs hallar, the dangerous rocks at the peninsula of Bjäre to the east. The old name of Kullen therefore seems to have been *Skjold*, 'the shield,' indeed a most suitable description of the rock as seen far out at sea, precisely from the point where baptisms later took place. Perhaps this rounded 'shield', then, is rather to be understood as a reference to an Iron Age or Viking Age *shield buckle* rather than any later variety.

Only in the case of the Norwegian *Jomfruland*, 'land of the Virgin' rather than 'Virgin land', can we find a corresponding sequence of three names, from *Aurr* to *Jomfruland* with the *noa* name *Landegode*. The references to its magic significance are almost as old as those to Kullen's.

It is very probable that both of these original names, *Skjold* and *Aurr*, hark back more or less to prehistoric times. And, who knows, there might have been another sequence of names before then …

However, there is another *Kulle/n/*, also called *Bonden*: the mountain *Kinnekulle* on Lake Vänern in Västergötland. In an academic dissertation of 1699, (*Dissertatio Academica*) *De Kinnakulle*, presented in Uppsala, Benedictus Österplan states that seafaring people on the lake dared neither to fix their gaze on the mountain nor mention its name, for fear of the *sylvani* or *fauni* that dwelt there. Old people had told him (who was born there) that seafarers passing the place had foundered dramatically and even been attacked by stones if they did not talk respectfully of the mountain. Instead of its usual name, they used *Kinna-Bonde*.[96]

Kinnekulle at 308 m ASL is the most prominent sighting mark anywhere on the lake, and even today it is used to predict the coming weather, much like Blå Jungfrun and other out-islands and rocks. I have recorded precisely the belief that it was supposed to be dangerous to fix one's gaze upon it, but it is also not unknown in other literature. This place name recurs at the lake in a straight northerly sailing direction from Kinnekulle. *Bonden* is thus a hill in Värmland at 143 m ASL, also called *Eds-Bonden* after the parish Ed. In that case, however, we do not know of any alternative name.

Like Kullen, a tall rocky island close to the Ångermanland coast of Norrland in Sweden is called *Högbonden*, 'the high farmer', and boasts a famous lighthouse. North of it, in Västerbotten south of Umeå, an isolated bird refuge on a small rock also called *Bonden* is an important landmark. In fact, there are several other islands called *Bonden*, especially in Bohuslän, Western Sweden. One is found in Norway, near Arendal in the south. All of them are islands or skerries of importance to shipping. Kullen and Kinnekulle are the only points belonging to the mainland. They have been treated with regard to different aspects by the linguists Sigurd Fries and Birgit Falck-Kjällqvist, though in both cases without any convincing reference to taboo names.[97]

The parson of Hudiksvall in Hälsingland, Olof J. Broman, supplied a voice from the North in his major work *Glysisvallur* of the 1720s. His original manuscript was destroyed during the Russian galley raids in 1721, and he had to rewrite it. It lists all kinds of prejudice and magic, and under the heading *Vid sjöresor*, "During sea journeys", we find:[98] "Ingen må nämna de känningar, öar, holmar stränder, som fram förut belägna äro, i synnerhet under segel ty då kommer motvind." ("No one is allowed to mention those landmarks, islands, holms, shores, which are ahead, in particular under sail, because then come contrary winds.")

In 1856 the pioneer ethnologist Leonard Rääf very briefly pointed out approximately the same thing in his classical ethnographic book on Ydre härad:[99] "Ö, till hvilken man seglar, får inte nämnas vid namn." ("An island you are sailing towards must not be mentioned by name.")

Another Swedish author, Daniel Tiselius, in his work *Uthförlig beskrifning … Wätter* of 1723, made an interesting note[100] about the island *Jungfrun* or *Fagerön* in Lake Vättern, the second largest lake in Sweden. If you saw the mermaid it was not permitted to mention it (even afterwards?). He also pointed out that it was not allowed to talk in a condescending way about the lake since Vättern is *the eye* of the larger Lake Vänern, as if it were the eye of a body.[101] As we already know, *Jungfrun* means 'the virgin', as in *Blå Jungfrun*. This name, or its equivalents, are spread all over the map, especially the sea chart, and cannot be ascribed merely to the influence of its famous namesake in Kalmarsund.

It should be added that *Jungfru* (*jomfru*, etc.) is derived from the German *Jungfrau* introduced to the Nordic languages around 1550. The indigenous word is *mö*, which could still be used. It was probably replaced by *Jungfru* and its equivalents at most sites.[102]

It is also obvious that *Fagerön*, mentioned above, is an ingratiating *noa* name or euphemism; it means 'the beautiful island'. Even though a third name ought to have existed, we do not know of it.

Tiselius recounts: "Äfwenwäll berättas om den lilla öön Jungfrun eller fagerön, det en icke må, medan man på siön wistas, nåot språka om henne (!), der man icke will lijda största olägenhet, innan man til lands kommer." ("It is also told about the small island Jungfrun or Fagerön, that you must not, while you are at sea, say anything about her (!) if you do not want to suffer serious disadvantages before you come to land.")

One of the earliest statements on the magic applied at sea comes from Norway and relates to the large island *Jomfruland* in Telemark, formerly called *Aurr.* As we have pointed out above, this was itself probably a forbidden name and thus replaced, like *Skjold* by Kullen, as described above. The parson Peder Claussøn Friis writes, in the first decades of the seventeenth century:[103] "Norske Skibsfolck, aff nogen Superstitz oc Vonne, ville icke neffne det

Land Jomfruland, naar de ere under Segel, før end de hafue seiglet det forbi, men kalde det Landet gode, huilcken Superstitz de oc observere met flere Orter." ("Norwegian sailors, from superstition or hope, did not want to mention the land Jomfruland when they were under sail, before having passed it, but called it Landet gode, which superstition they also observed at other places.")

The *noa* name *Landet gode*, 'the good land', but with an indicative magic inversion of the adjective, 'land good', is found in several places along the Norwegian coasts but is not known from elsewhere in Scandinavia. One of them, in Sunnmøre, is also called *Svinøy* – which is fishy since it contains the word for a swine, which we know to be normally taboo at sea – or simply *Stor-Skjæret*, 'the big skerry'.

No swine have ever been to Svinøy. Rather, this naming expresses a principle among the many animal names for islets and skerries along the coasts, not only that of Norway. Some may have been used for grazing the respective species, but most were not, as is amply proven by their barren land. Most of these names are clearly magical, intended to remind people of danger, either in navigation or in forgetting to perform the proper rituals at the site.

Another *Landegode* is situated just outside Bodø in Nordland, much further north. This is the only site without another (known) name.[104] As landmarks, however, all of these sites are crucial in navigation and received lighthouses in later times. They all point to dangerous passages by sea. Solheim is with all certainty correct in his assessment that the meaning 'good land' is a true *godnemne*, or euphemism.

One conclusion drawn from the experience of the *Landegode* sites is that they are located on major maritime routes and mirror name-giving by sailors rather than by local people. According to Solheim, it is the danger of foundering there that lies at the root of the prejudice. However, the alternative names were used only by local people, mostly fishermen.

The coast is studded with examples of both categories, the names used by sailors in the context of the sailing route, and the names used by fishermen to designate their fishing grounds, and according to Solheim they are often clearly distinguishable from each other. They reflect different perspectives on the same site. In the case of Svinøy above, the present-day *noa* name used by the local fishermen is thus *Storskjæret*.

Another obvious *noa* name or *godnemne* is that of *Holmen grå*, 'grey holm', which is also another example of a name with an inverted adjective. This locality is found close to Strömstad, Bohuslän, in present-day Sweden, where a famous battle in Norwegian history took place in AD 1139. At least three other *Holmengrå* are known. The name of one of them has disappeared, but its mention by Peder Claussøn Friis[105] makes it probable that it is the present *Gråholmen* outside Grimstad in Aust-Agder. Then we have another *Holmengrå* at Austevoll fairly close to Bergen. No other name is known for

this small site. The third *Holmengrå* is situated at Fedje, Sunnfjord, and also had the local names *Uttråna* and *Tembå*.

The northernmost occurrence is found in Finnmark, where the denoted place *Holmengrå* appears to be a peninsula, or part of the same. Perhaps the name is a migration name imposed by sailors in later times, as indicated by Solheim. Yet the fact that it is the site of an impressive stone maze may indicate that the local Sami thought the site was haunted or possessed some other kind of magical properties.[106]

In Solheim's opinion, the parallels between the *Holmengrå* and *Landegode* sites is fairly clear in most cases. These localities are critical sites on sailing routes and the denoted site – at least sometimes – bore several names, of which one was local.

In the seventeenth century, there was in fact still a *Holmengrå* in Rackeby parish on Lake Vänern, Sweden, now *Gråen*, 'the grey one', which was not observed by Solheim.[107] The record is from a map. This small skerry is an important landmark on approaching the harbour of Järna, known as such since the mid sixteenth century. In fact, as Solheim pointed out, *Gråen* is an alternative name of one the Norwegian occurrences – that at Fedje, Sunnfjord.

It should also be observed that an island that is a part of the present-day town of Landskrona, founded in 1419 and located on the Sound in Skåne, present-day Sweden, is called *Gråen*. However, it is not clear whether it has ever been called *Holmengrå*. Yet this nevertheless remains a distinct possibility even for other skerries carrying the prefix *Grå-*. During interviews, something "eerie" about several such places has been indicated to me personally. One reason is clear: they do not appear grey at all.

It is a pity that Solheim did not discuss the implications of colour, either in this case or in the case of the black robes of the parson mentioned above. Because as I have already pointed out, the colour grey is *a colour commonly understood as that between black and white. Black is the land, white is the sea*. This means that *grey is a truly liminal component at sea or on the sea*. There are several earlier observations in this vein. According to the folklorist Jan-Inge Wall, grey was "a colour that in the past was often supposed to show that an animal did not belong to this world".[108] Another view is that of the ethnologist Brita Egardt, who pointed out that "grey is the special colour for water".[109] In a very brief study on the place name *Grå Häst*, 'grey horse', designating several skerries in Lake Vänern, I have myself proposed some new ideas about such names.[110] I should perhaps add that some of my interviews of maritime people have further substantiated my impression that the colour grey is thought of as generally liminal, ambiguous and to some extent dangerous at sea. As already mentioned, its liminal status is interesting in this sense, even in association with "empirical" animals mentioned as taboo

at sea: *gråben*, *graabein*, *gråfot* for wolf, *de grå* for wolves as a collective, *de små grå* for mice, or *gråbeinen* for fog.

Above we have mentioned the ship names containing the element cow (*ku*, *ko*), often as a suffix. The cow was among the animals that were taboo at sea. For some reason, these ship names are often combined with the colour red. The same names are used for tiny islets or skerries. Yet very few, if any, of the (at least a dozen) skerries so named display a red colour. On the contrary, most seem to be precisely grey.

Another principle proposed by Solheim is that of *place-name euphemisms* in the sense that they make the locality look much better than it is. The Norwegian verb is *pynta på namnet*, 'decorating the name', well understood also in Swedish. The best illustration seems to be the prefix *Smør-*, as in *Smørsund*, or 'butter sound', which seems to indicate that a vessel could slip through it quite easily. In reality, however, the respective sound could be a dangerously narrow passage with rocks concealed under the surface of the water. A feature common to the localities named *Landegode*, *Holmengrå* and *Smørsund*, *Smørstakk*, etc. is either that they are found at critical points along a coastal sailing route, sometimes in crossroads, or that they are dangerous in stormy weather or bad visibility. These are just a few examples of the large-scale cognitive network in force at sea.

On the status of all such names, Solheim states that "we have here a reliable guiding rule to map the old fairways along our coast".[111] These old fairways were exclusively sailing routes that, to a certain extent, were replaced by routes increasingly adapted to steamships during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Only where the old and new routes coincide do we find lighthouses and other modern sailing marks.

Solheim's all-encompassing explanation is thus that these places are dangerous to shipping. While I do not deny this in principle – and definitely not concerning the sites he discusses –, I strongly doubt that this is the only reason.

The maritime cultural landscape is studded with indicative place names of another, more local character. A staggering number of tabooed phenomena and sites are actually named without a known *noa* name. In other cases, the taboo name seems to have fallen into oblivion and the paraphrase lingers on, as in the cases cited above. Examples of this process can thus be seen along the major sailing routes, as in the cases of *Landegode* and *Holmengrå*. Solheim proposes that it has always been like that. Rather than inventing a *noa* name, a number of ceremonies were carried out at the "small" places on the way to fishing grounds and on inshore fairways. Accordingly, *rituals took the place of magical renaming*.

Perhaps this explains why sometimes the obvious taboo name has been retained and the obvious *noa* name forgotten, or the other way around. Ac-

cording to Solheim, the process has then been stalled and another mechanism, ritual, has replaced the former name-giving. Yet it is equally likely that both processes were in force simultaneously for quite some time.

The assumed subsequent ceremonies or rituals were carried out in the context of the initiation of young fishing novices while on their way to the fishing grounds. The novices were taught to remember the route and its details by being tricked into pronouncing the tabooed name or greeting the place. Some of the places to be greeted were given obscene names, for example the female *Møyaskrevet*, *Kjerringræva*, *Hondsfitta*, and the statement that the requirement to greet them had been fulfilled could sound quite humorous: "Now you have greeted the *hondsfitta* ['dog's cunt']." The crew would laugh and the poor novice would redden, never to forget his humiliation.

However, more innocuous rituals were equally common. At a rock called *Bagarstenen*, 'baker's stone', the usual act was to doff your hat or other headgear. The place name used in this, a paraphrase of some kind, always has some association with or relation to the act that is supposed to take place. In the case of *Bagarstenen*, you would think of the baker's characteristic headgear.

Symbols and metaphors were used profusely. At other places, the apprentices were supposed to make an offering. The name *Skomakaren*, 'the shoemaker' (see above on fish names), served as a reminder to throw nails into the water – that is, the type of nails used by a shoemaker to fasten a sole. At *Finnkjerringa*, 'the Lapp hag', you would throw tobacco because such a woman was expected to smoke a pipe.

Other places at sea would have required offerings of small coins. To refuse such an offering would bring about retribution or revenge from the powers at large in the sea. If tricked into pronouncing a name which was taboo, the apprentice would have to be punished and pay a fine, usually in the form of a dram of spirits for everyone on the crew. The ceremony or ritual was called a *skårungs-* or *svennestykke* as a way of pointing out the new status of a novice or apprentice in other walks of life or handicraft guilds. The term *hansing* could be also used, otherwise used in the sailor's baptism (more below).

Solheim obviously believes that even places with explicitly tabooed names, for example *Bispen*, 'the bishop', *Kraaka*, 'the crow', *Ravnen*, 'the raven', and *Hestnes*, 'horse's point', have always cultivated such ceremonies, although there may seldom be records of the same.

Another result of Solheim's analyses would be the claim of a practical purpose. *The rituals carried out in fact registered stages attained along a certain sailing route.* This was obviously in the interest of all members of a ship's crew, not only the novices.

Essentially, Solheim's descriptions and analysis sound convincing. To me it is moreover obvious that there is a direct connection to the baptism of

sailors, another initiation rite, where *a footing was paid*, to quote one of the terms in use in English. In German it was called *hänseln*, in most Nordic languages *hanse*, an exception being Sweden, where it was called *sota*. Since the ceremony is known to have been carried out at dangerous and characteristic landmarks, it is not inconceivable that an element of trickery was once included, for example the utterance of a name that was taboo. Considering the fact that they were supposed to be kept secret to outsiders, it is no wonder if many of these rituals are very little known. Even though they take on a festive and humorous touch in later times, there is no doubt that both real baptism, i.e. keel-hauling, or real flogging once took place. As we can see from the testimony of Loorits above on Estonia, this could happen even among fishermen when someone had violated a taboo.

The complex of the sailor's baptism will be discussed below. It is to be remembered that the connection I have proposed between ceremonies in fishing and shipping is my own idea. Neither Svale Solheim nor the expert on the sailor's baptism, the Danish ethnologist Henning Henningsen, states this explicitly.

Summing up my criticism of Solheim's important work, there is still something unsaid. What I particularly feel is wrong is the idea that the reason for all these forbidden things was limited to "purely practical considerations, according to the role that these different localities played for fishing and transport" ("etter reint praktiske omsyn, etter den rolle dei ulike lokalitetar spela for fisket og ferdsla").[112] This kind of superstition has always been despised, even by certain fishermen themselves, especially those active in the Free Church movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Even the term superstition itself reeks of primitivity. I also have the distinct feeling that Solheim was ashamed of the irrational character of the prejudices he studied. In order to compensate for that, he tried to introduce a rational formula to explain those prejudices. I do agree that most of the places referred to here – but also my own study areas, where I have made an effort to apply the same perspective – are dangerous even in a techno-practical sense. Yet there is more to it than that. In my vocabulary, this is *belief*. And sometimes the "empirical" danger is not very apparent at all. Perhaps even non-existent – but how do you prove that? As I see it, we need more in-depth studies of particular localities, although they must be of a well-chosen complexity to be useful at all.

A better sense of what is at stake was illustrated by Per Hovda, a colleague of Solheim's (and referred to by him), in a few contributions. I am thinking of his short article on *Kjerring* names[113] and the longer one on the place names denoting animals, published the same year.[114] He clearly indicated that these names are indeed magical names and not necessarily utilitarian in any sense. And there is no doubt that some denote dangerous localities.

The conclusions reached by Solheim on Norwegian fishing *med* is another point. The basic idea is that they influenced the naming of important sighting points far inland, and that the name of the site, i.e. the crossing of a transit line, in some way bore a reference to the most important of these sighting points. I do indeed believe that these conclusions are correct, in particular as regards earlier times. Realistically, I have to be very vague about the dating here.

Yet the dissertation by Per Hovda[115] on this complex does not confirm Solheim's conclusions on the whole. The inevitable reflection of an observer who believed in the fundamental soundness of Solheim's results would of course be, firstly, that the sources are too few, simply because of a *general* lack of them in the past, and a *particular* lack with regard to maritime life. This is true, although with certain modifications.

Secondly, all of these matters were *more or less secret*, so you would not find such sources anyway. Henningsen also cites this circumstance in connection with baptism at sea: "Sailors were not very communicative about the custom …" on the lack of early sources among sailors. Yet this is a fundamental weakness faced by all studies of the culture of fishermen and sailors, i.e. maritime culture, in the past. A general reconstruction must nevertheless be possible.

The most important lesson we can learn from the study of taboos and related mechanisms at sea is that we can discern *a structural opposition, based on the contrast between sea and land.* This is definitely a magical opposition, a magical dualism. The potential of such tension between elements is enormous. It would surprising if it were not also used to advantage. I think it can be seen that this was the case.

Things are treated, told and spoken of differently at sea than on land. What is more, another language was created to fulfil the magic requirements. Land phenomena are particularly taboo at sea. The opposite principle does not work very efficiently. Presumably, the demand was not as great on land – another aspect of a clear contrast.

In principle, all land phenomena were taboo at sea. Yet only those of which fishermen were conscious would have been applied. Land itself was taboo. A vast number of phenomena were implicated, even including some that do not seem strictly to represent land. It is difficult to believe that other elements or spheres were not influenced by the fundamental dualism of sea and land. What is more, the sky most often seems to merge with the sea in cognition in a seaside environment.[116] Fishing and hunting at sea is, metaphorically speaking, a remnant of the Mesolithic hunter, fisher and gatherer cultures. In applying the label magic to the cognitive systems of these "remnants", I am aware of a distinct challenge to those who have denied that magic is a suitable term. They have sought for a more complex explanation, for example of the contents of rock carvings. But is magic not complex enough?

In my appreciation of the cognitive landscape, I have stated, to avoid value judgments, that this is *a coherent system of belief*, in fact, singularly coherent. Maybe magic should also be reinterpreted in this way? The structure discovered here is not an offshoot of structuralism in the sense of imitation along the lines of Claude Lévi-Strauss. It stands on its own legs from the very beginning.

The baptism of sailors

Generally speaking, the opinions on the degree of religiosity of historical sailors vary widely. In one sense, however, they all agree: superstition and ritual were omnipresent.

Let us quote a voice from the Romance world:

> In summary, considering the consistent lack of interest in liturgical celebrations among the mariners of diverse countries and considering also the scant attention they paid to messages from the clergy and their belief in numerous superstitions, it is understandable for a historian to affirm that the men of the sea were one of the most irreligious groups in early modern Europe.[117]

Whether one accepts this affirmation or not depends on the conception each person has about what constitutes religion. There are many who think there is not much difference between superstition and religion in general. From this point of view, if religious belief is hardly more than a collection of well-structured superstitions that use universal explanations and aspirations to regulate human societies, perhaps we ought not to qualify the mariners of the sixteenth century as irreligious. They simply held a system of beliefs somewhat different from the precepts of official dogma, and, thanks to the peculiarities of their work, counted on the possibility of maintaining those beliefs outside the supervision of many of the established powers on earth.[118]

The rituals often referred to were most probably the baptisms of sailor novices and other initiation ceremonies. It has already been pointed out that *Bonden*, the *noa* name of Kullen and some other sites, means 'the farmer'. *It is obvious that it is a Nordic metaphor for 'land', 'inland', 'land-bound', in contrast to the sea.* Yet it is also something more. *Bonden*, which originally also meant 'husband' and 'master', is also an incarnation of the male principle in the North. It could also be a metaphor for 'the stable', 'the firm', like the Finnish term *haltikko*.

The perception of this contrast between sea and land is international. Let us consider, by way of comparison, Mary Helms's survey of anthropological literature.[119] The author summarizes Munn (1977) on conceptions of the Gawa in Papua New Guinea: "The land zones, or land as a whole, is

contrasted with the sea in qualities of motion and associated with lightness, slipperiness, speed and upwardness." According to Tambiah (1983), the Trobrianders nearby compare[120] "canoe travels with magical trips through the sky. Land … signifies 'anchoring', stability, and traditional agricultural life, while the sea, separated from the land by the beach and its spiritual powers, is characterized by unanchored movement, turbulence, speed, up and down motion …".

So only the *noa* name *Bonden*, the symbol of land, stability and agriculture, was used at sea instead of Kullen. Something taken from and marking land accordingly provides an advantage at sea, at least as a precaution. Even though this may seem contrary to my first principle above, it is a logical step. The reverse idea – that is, that sea phenomena can be used favourably on land – would also be possible. This is how magic may have been applied, even in prehistory.

The mechanism of *noa* names described above is once again very clearly at work. By this I mean that the mechanism expresses a fundamental contrast between water and land, like the naming prejudices accounted for by Solheim. *Kullen*, alias *Kulla-Bonden*, of Scania (Skåne) was in historical times the most important site of sailors' baptisms in Northern Europe.[121] This means that it was a *hönse* or initiation site for young sailors.

This fact opens up new aspects of the ritual landscape at sea, and of the antagonism between land and sea, thanks to the pioneering works of Henning Henningsen.[122] There are many such initiation sites in the maritime world (figs. 6–8). I propose that most of these sites, like *Kullen*, were originally inextricably interwoven with the phenomenon of *noa* names. It is probably impossible, or at least highly unlikely, that such names and such interrelationships can be found or reconstructed in each case. Yet I assume that the origin of the ceremony of baptism at sea goes back to the consequences of violating a taboo, above all uttering a taboo name. It is probably possible to illustrate even Solheim's principle that the process of renaming the tabooed place names with *noa* names has been successively replaced by rituals. However, as state previously, the two procedures could very well have been carried out concurrenetly in many cases.

There are quite a number of such *noa* sites which served as direction marks for the baptism ceremony on board vessels. Most of them are still known in tradition but, as already mentioned, not always by their original names, if they ever had one. Initiation by baptism was carried out with young sailors when they passed the respective site for the first time, marking an important leg in their, and any, journey.

In English, the ceremony is mainly called *pay a footing* or *pay a standing*, usually used on entering a company. It was called *hönse* in Danish, *hanse* in Norwegian, and *hänseln* in German. We have already encountered this word as *han/d/se* in Solheim's survey. Only in Swedish was a different term

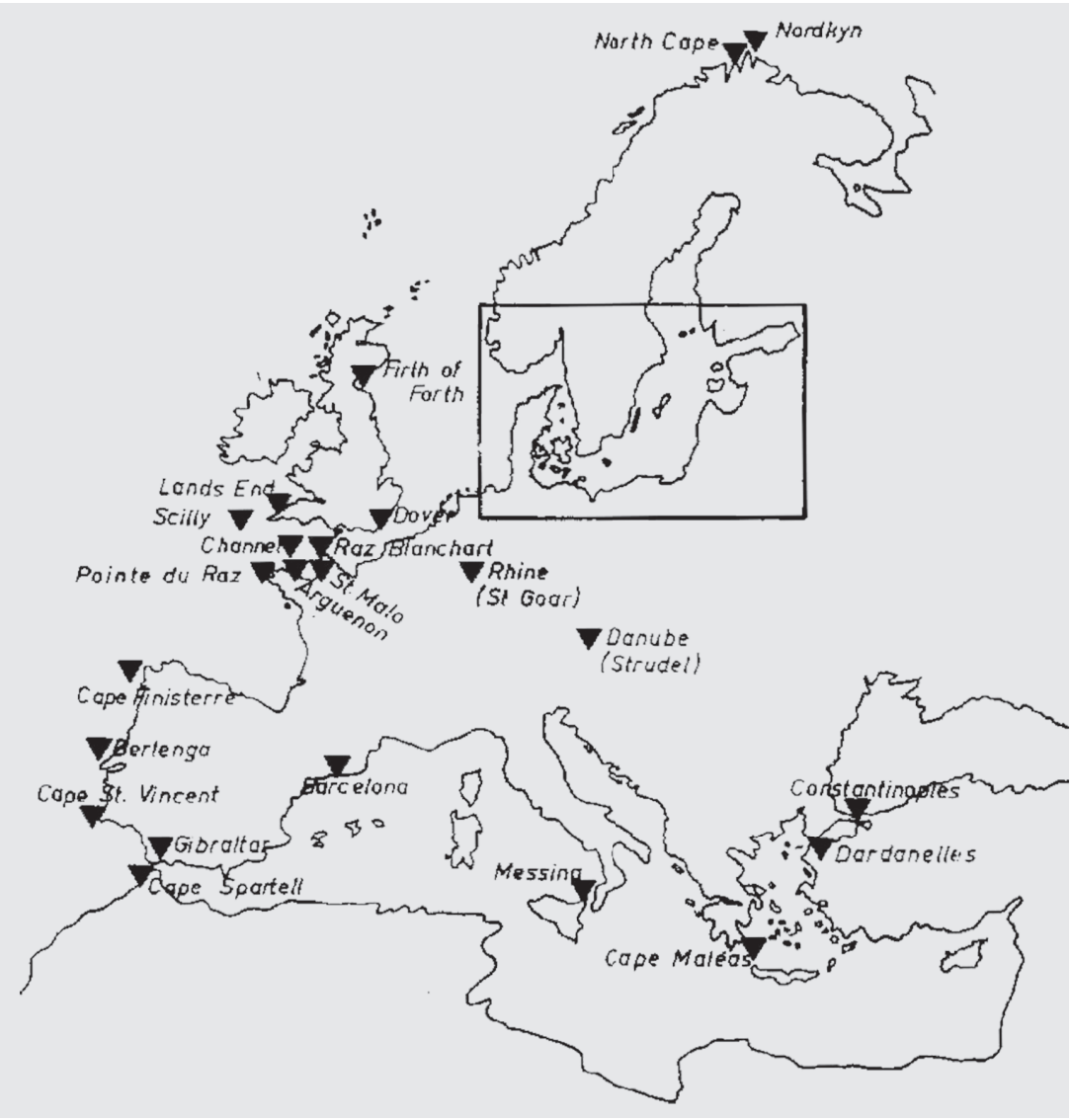

Fig. 6. Baptismal sites in Europe. (After Henningsen 1961)

used: *att sota*. During the ceremony, the face of the person being baptized was blackened by smearing it with soot, Swedish *sot*, which is the origin of the verb: to *sotade* or *hønsede för* ('for') the site in question. In Swedish, ceremonies of this kind were accordingly called *sota för Kullen* and *sota för Näset* (Lindesnes; see below), *sota för Linjen* ('the line', i.e. the equator), etc.

What I mean is that the ceremony originally meant that the young sailor was induced to do – or essentially tricked into doing – something that was

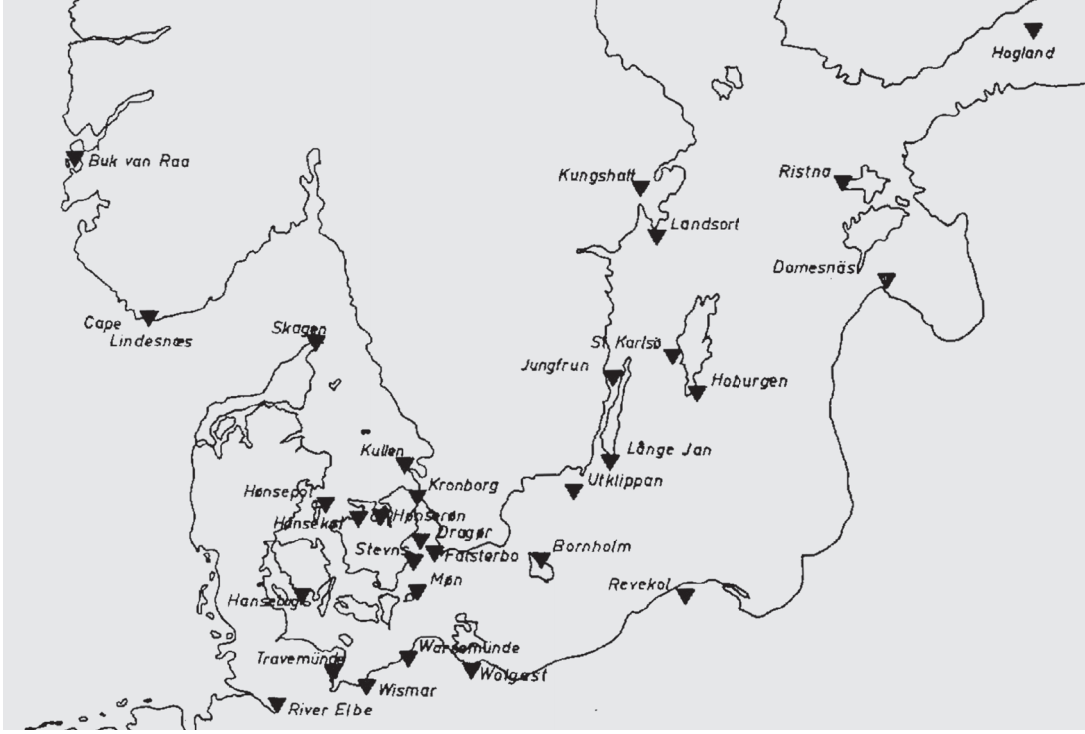

Fig. 7. Baptismal sites in the Scando-Baltic area. (After Henningsen 1961)

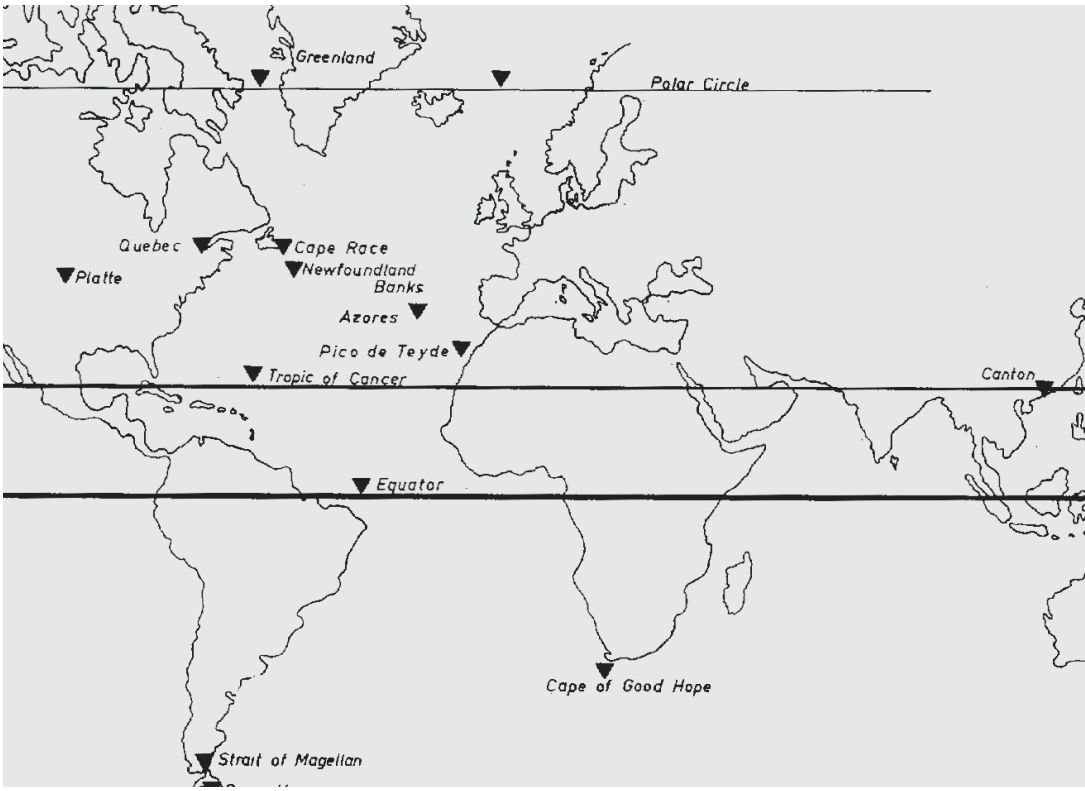

Fig. 8. Baptismal sites outside Europe. (After Henningsen 1961)

taboo and then literally had to pay for it. In other words, to avoid being keelhauled he had to pay for drinks for his colleagues while being (or after having been) undressed and blackened by the others. It is interesting that this verb *sota* was introduced into Swedish daily parlance in a different but much more well-known meaning as *sota för något*, which means 'to pay [figuratively speaking] for something that you have done more or less illegally and at someone's displeasure'. The original meaning here was presumably that you had *broken a taboo and would have to pay for it.* As has been pointed out above, this taboo would almost invariably have been a *name taboo*, relating, logically, to the name of the site in question. According to Henningsen, even the act of *looking* at the site could be a violation, for example at Kullen[123] and the same is known of Kinnekulle, mentioned above, even from my own experience. The unsuspecting novice was induced to do, or tricked into doing, so and then had to pay his dues.

As regards this custom, my view is in accordance with Svale Solheim's analysis of fishing rituals. However, my aim is to get to what I believe is the gist of maritime behaviour by introducing a link to sailors. Such a reconstruction would be based on the assumption that the rules of conduct and maritime culture in general were originally based on local customs practised by fishermen. It is, in my view, accordingly in fishing that the greatest number of original customs have survived.[124] The collective baptismal rites of sailors correspond in their essence to the small-scale initiation rites of fishermen. We have already mentioned this above, and will return to this line of thought several times in the following.

There are no place names reminding us of the ceremony as such. The *høns/e* place names of Denmark and Norway are irrelevant, derived as they almost invariably are, from *høns*, 'hens'. Only *Hønsepolden* at Samsø in Denmark alludes clearly to a *hønse* site that is recorded as such in the sources at our disposal. It is highly unlikely that the Swedish verb *sota* has had any impact on place names.[125] This conjecture can serve as a point of departure for the study of the sites themselves. We find sources such as interviews and printed material as the only record of their locations.

The custom and the expression can be documented in connection with shipping only in fairly late historical times. The fact that almost no mention of the ceremony in place names is found on land further confirms the impression that it belonged to the mobile world of the sailing routes. Inland, the knowledge of baptism sites was accordingly very limited.

One of the world's best-known *hønse* sites is thus found at *Cape Kullen*. It is undoubtedly a dangerous place. Apart from the dangerous passage at Kullen itself, one might confuse Kullen with the 'false Kullen', *falska Kullen*, or *Hafskullen*, that is, *Hovs hallar*, the cliffs of the Hallandsåsen ridge further to the east. To double *that* Cape in bad weather would have had fatal consequences.[126] At the true Kullen, you would have to be careful not to get

the looming rocks to leeward. The currents outside the mouth of the Sound could be as fateful to ships with no means of propulsion other than sails. The only emergency harbour in the neighbourhood of the false and the real Kullen in the cases of hard westerlies or southerlies was to leeward of the island group of *Hallands Väderö*. This haven was much frequented in days of yore, in spite of the rather notorious approach.[127]

The two sites of baptism at *Helsingør* and at *Dragør* south of Copenhagen further into the Sound could on the one hand be understood as symbolic transitions to new fairwaters and on the other hand interpreted as a hearty relief in view of the lucky passage of two truly dangerous points. For on the other side of the Sound no cliffs loomed, but the stony sand and gravel banks of *Falsterbo rev* (riff) crept surreptitiously. The difference in the water level between the Baltic proper and the Atlantic, including the Sound, can exceed 2 metres.[128] This meant that the currents either from the north, the Sound, or from the south, the Baltic, might run you inexorably towards the banks of *Revet*. Moreover, at Helsingør you had started or completed an important part of a sea journey, marked by payment of the Sound customs, Danish *Sundtolden*, in existence from AD 1429 to 1857.

To be sure, there were other *hønse* sites at *Stevns* and *Falsterbo*. For all these sites in or just outside the sound, the principle was that you had to pass dangerous points before the ceremony took place. The *noa* names of the sites are not known. But they certainly must have existed.

The border between the Atlantic/the Skagerak and the inner fairways of Kattegat was considered to run at *Cape Skagen*, *The Scaw*, the north-easternmost point of Jutland with its justly feared sandbank, *Grenen*. In sight of the cape with the lighthouse called *Langemand*/*Långemannen*/*Long Man* was a site for initiation. This name served as a *noa* name for Skagen. At least the hats were doffed here, if there were any.[129]

The geography of ritual passages

The locations of the sites of baptism and similar ceremonies conform to classical transitory passages, for example at *Bukken* on the route to Bergen, or at the *North Cape*/*Nordkapp*. Bukken means 'the buck', and is certainly one of the animal names that indicate a magical spot.[130] For unknown reasons, these two are represented very strongly in the sources applied by Henningsen, although Bukken is not a very characteristic place in comparison with, for example, the North Cape. A less important site in the sources[131] was *Lindesnes* or *Cape Naze* on the Agder coast of Southern Norway (figs. 9, 11). However, its extraordinary significance to sailors may not be so apparent merely from a look at the map. It is indeed the southernmost point of the Norwegian mainland. In maritime practice, however, its significance was perhaps established in a more important way since time immemorial. Jens Lauritzen Wolf

testified to it in 1651: "This cape was known to all seafarers of the North Sea and by it they knew that they were under Norway and could thereafter and thereby set their course for other lands."[132] The promontory is very distinct to a sailor, looming along the horizon for a long time during the passage of the coast.

Several interpretations have been made of the meaning of its name. No convincing solution has yet been found. One possibility that seems plausible is that its translation in Latin *promontorium afflictionum (passionum)*, 'the point of passions', was derived from the known Norse form *Liðandisnes(s)* with the same meaning. It is obvious that the cognitive world of deep-sea sailors is universal. Interestingly, at the other end of the Eurasian continent there is another cape whose name has approximately the same meaning: *Mys Terpeniya*, a long spit of land on the Western coast of Sachalin. The Russian name means 'the cape of patience or passion'. It would then conform well with the category of maritime place names which I have called *names of warning*.[133] Such names would point to the kind of danger, damage or, if accepted in this case, sufferings of a sailor. The first sailing handbook in Low German, *Das Seebuch*, dating from ca. AD 1500, points to the direct sailing route from Walcheren in the Netherlands to Lindesnes, *Nese (Neze*, etc.), and further to Skudenes(havn), *Schutenessen*, on Karmøy, north of Stavanger.[134] The structure of the directions and distances accounted for in the *Caerte van oostlant* in AD 1543 demonstrate the overwhelming importance of Lindesnes,[135] together with such points of reference as Walcheren, Shetland and Cape Skagen (The Scaw) in Denmark. Significantly, the first lighthouse in Norway was built here in 1656, but it was not made permanent until 1725, after the Great Northern War (1697–1721).

The importance of Lindesnes is easy to account for. It was the first and foremost sighting point of the southern coast of Norway. At this promontory, the sailing routes from the west converged. In the era of convoys across the Skagerak, this was where ships parted company to go either west and north or east and south to the Baltic proper. One route continued on to Bergen by way of the straits at Karmøy and the consecutive inshore route past the abovementioned *Bukken* (see below). The route continuing towards the Baltic was expected to leave the mainland contour at *Jomfruland* at Kragerø in Telemark, which we have already mentioned as a magical point of passage.

Lindesnes was thus called *The Naze*, *De Nez* and similar names by British (very often Scottish) and Dutch sailors. It was a stormy, exposed and dangerous place with austere, forbidding cliffs. Above all, the currents were extremely treacherous at the point. This same was true of the entire passage eastward from there. Very often, one dared not – for good reasons – pass Lindesnes immediately on the approach. On both sides of the promontory were therefore established, well-frequented emergency harbours with various services available. Here the optimal sailing winds could be awaited. In

medieval times, it seems that the most important was *Korshamn/Selør* to the west, *Selør* already being well-known in the sagas, and *Korshamn* mentioned as *Corshaun* as early as AD 1427. It was one of the very few places in this part of Norway mentioned in that year by the first Danish cartographer, Claudius Claussøn Swart.[136]

On the other, eastern side, especially *Svinør* on the mainland was well known as a harbour, at least later. Lindesnes marked the traditional border between Skagerak and the North Sea. Even today it is well known as a meteorological (climatic) border. We have already mentioned *Skagen*, *The Scaw*, which marks the border between the waters of Skagerak and Kattegat. As will be mentioned later in another connection, there is no known obvious *noa* name for the longish cape itself, but such a name must undoubtedly have existed. However, no such name is known in either case, except somewhat improperly the name of the lighthouse, *The Long Man*, at Skagen. Possibly the intense international traffic and its rationalism has eradicated them? On the other hand, there is at least the harbour name of *Svinør* east of Lindenes, which conforms to the principles of *noa* names, the swine being taboo at sea, as we have seen. That is at least an argument, however feeble.

In the Kattegat, we know only of *Hønsepolden* at Besser rev (riff) off Samsø Island, Denmark, the destination of several of the fairly shallow passages of the Western Kattegat. The only important emergency harbour at sea was at *Kyholm*, east of Samsø. And we have already mentioned *Kullen* several times in the same area. Later we will also find a wealth of *hönse* sites in the Baltic.

The traditions of initiation at these sites were by no means universally applied. According to the sources, German sailors were particularly active at Lindesnes and the North Cape, Danish at Bukken (Bergen) and the North Cape, Swedish at Lindesnes, and Finnish, Latvian and Estonian sailors at Bornholm, Dagö/Hiumaa and the North Cape.[137] The North Cape was obviously used by sailors destined for the great northern harbour of Czarist Russia at Archangelsk. The most universally used site, however, was *Kullen* of Skåne.

On the continent, we know of regular ceremonies at the rocks of *de Keyser* and *de Keyserin* near *Pointe du Raz* of Brittany, *Cape Finisterre/Cabo Fisterra* off Galicia, Northern Spain, and the *Berlengas* archipelago/*Ilhas Berlengas*, north of Lisbon in Portugal.[138] These sites were known as such all over Europe. Henning Henningsen draws the conclusion that when the Berlengas archipelago lost its function as a baptismal site in around the 1750s, it had already been superseded by the crossing of the equator as a baptismal site. It was normally here, on the coast of Portugal, that the sailing ships left Europe for America or South Africa and baptism took place only when they were far out. This made a duplication at the Berlengas unnecessary.

In Normandy, baptismal sites are known at *Raz Blanchart* in the channel west of Cape de la Hague and at the mouth of the river *Arguenon* west of St. Malo.

In the British Isles, the white chalk cliff of *Dover* at the entrance to the Channel was an important site of baptism. Others were the important points *Land's End* and the *Scilly Islands*, the latter, for example, transcribed as *Sorles* in Dutch, along with a number of other variations, on the other side of the Channel. The impressive bridge across the Firth of Forth in Scotland, built in 1888–90, much later became another site, probably the last established point of traditional baptism.

At the entrance to the Mediterranean were important initiation sluices such as *Cape San Vincent/Cabo São Vicente* in Portugal and, understandably, the *Rock of Gibraltar.* On the coast of Africa, *Cape Spartell* at Tangiers was popular. Inside the Mediterranean, Henningsen[139] also mentions *Barcelona*, the straits of *Messina* and the classical "point of no return" of Greece, *Cape Maléas* in the Southern Peloponnese. The passages at the *Dardanelles* and at *Constantinople* would be of interest when approaching the Black Sea.

Outside Europe, Henningsen registered *Cape Race* in Newfoundland, the Banks of Newfoundland, the *Pico de Teyde* mountain on the Canary Islands, the island of *San Jorge* in the Azores, the *Cape of Good Hope* between the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean, the *Straits of Magellan* with *Cape Horn* between the Atlantic and the Pacific.

There were also several sites for the baptism of sailors *along rivers* – on the Elbe, the Rhine, also the famous Rock of Lorelei, the Danube, sites at Quebec and Platte in Canada and close to Canton in China. This may appear irrelevant in a study which tries to connect their rise with the Scandinavian *noa* names, but we do possess an early source precisely on rivers. As far back as 1670, the Swedish author Loccenius mentioned that "in certain rivers sailors forbid the passengers to mention the names of these sites so as not to cause storm and mortal danger".[140] No specific location is given, but it could refer to his own country.

In the Baltic roads of the island of *Bornholm* there is a known area of baptism, in all probability mostly for sailors from the Southern Baltic. They sometimes interpreted the passage here as the end of the Baltic.[141] In the same way, *Hoburgen* at the southern tip of Gotland marked the transition to another fairway. *Hoburgsgubben*, the 'Old Man at Hoburgen', was a counterpart to the *Kullamannen* of Kullen, actually a personification of its *noa* name *Bonden*, 'the farmer'. They were known collectively as *Gubbarne*, 'the old men', by sailors. At the very least a greeting was always expected south of Gotland. There is no real *noa* name known for Hoburgen, but here, as elsewhere, there ought to have been one. Henningsen also mentions *Stora Karlsö* on the eastern coast of Gotland, *Utklippan* in Blekinge, where the

lighthouse was called *d(i)e Waschfrau*, 'the washerwoman', by German sailors, and, interestingly, *Långe Jan*, 'Long John', the lighthouse at the southern tip of Öland, after a former but now ruined church dedicated to St. John the Baptist. These names might have fulfilled the function of *noa* names, as improperly, however, as *The Long Man* at Skagen.

The latter southern Öland site was an important sighting point where routes parted company, inside or outside the straits of Kalmar. *Blå Jungfrun* in the northern part of the straits has been discussed earlier. In the extended straits of Kalmar it was not allowed to mention the many small windmills, Swedish *stubbamöllor*, by their correct term. Instead they were called *tjuvkors*, 'thieves' crosses', apparently alluding to the shape of their wings and obviously seen as 'stealing the wind'. As we have seen, Henningsen pointed out the custom among Danish fishermen of calling the windmills *trindel*, another *noa* name,[142] as we have seen above. Solheim was also familiar with these names and equivalents.

The skerry of *Röda Kon*, 'The Red Cow', was located in the northern part of the Baltic, close to Landsort south of the entrances to Stockholm. This name recurs, as we have indicated above, at several places, although definitely not, as far as we know, at other sites of baptism. The skerry *Röda kon* has sometimes been interpreted, also by myself, as the original foundering place for a ship, presumably called *De Roode Koe* or something similar in Low German or Dutch. But the sites so named are so many and distributed so evenly that they must represent something else. Apparently the 'Red Cow' was a migratory magic name within maritime culture. This phenomenon is also mentioned in chapter one above.

In the south, the Cashubian highland in present-day Poland with the summit at *Revekol*, seven kilometres inland, was the magic landfall before the peninsula of *Hel/a*, but no ceremonies are known. See below on those place names.

At some distance in the east we then find *Cape Ristna* on *Dagö*, *Hiumaa*, and the point of *Domesnäs*, *Kolkas rags*. This later point is mentioned in a maritime context on a Swedish rune stone dating all the way back to the eleventh century.[143] *Hogland* or *Suursaari* is the only recorded site of sailors' baptisms in the Bay of Finland. Less important sites of *hänseln* were found at the entrances to the German port cities of the southern Baltic: *Travemünde*, *Wismar*, *Warnemünde* and *Wolgast*.

There are many other sites which have never been recorded, as Henningsen emphasizes. Since the passage of *Jomfruland* with its *noa* name *Landet Gode* at the seaboard of Telemark, Norway, in Skagerak is an important passage of the same kind as *Lindesnes*, it is by no means unreasonable to assume that this was once also a site for *hanse* baptism. As we have seen, the cognitive significance of this island for sailors was pointed out by Peder Claussøn Friis as far back as AD 1600. The same goes for other sites called *Landegode*, as

well as for islands bearing the name *Holmen Grå*, such as that situated at the northern passage to Strömstad in northern Bohuslän.

There are many other possible sites in the Baltic. If *Hammeren*, 'the (rock) hammer', on Danish Bornholm was a site of baptism, then why not *Sandhammaren*, 'the sand hammer', on the opposite side in Skåne in Sweden? These two sites were given names related to one another and both were dangerous, each in its own way, although of course the lowland of Skåne was not quite as visible as the granite plateau of Bornholm. On the other hand, it was far more dangerous, if that is a reliable criterion (which can be doubted).

The chalk cliffs of northern *Rügen* and the banks of the extended peninsula Hel/a, protecting the Bay of Gdansk, are equally interesting. It should be observed that both *Revekol*, *Rävkullen*, 'the fox hill', mentioned above, and *Hel*, in fact meaning 'hell', are names with a Scandinavian background, as opposed to West Slavonic or German.[144] A typical feature of *noa* names in fishing, as we have seen, is the use of terms taken from foreign languages. Earlier we encountered this phenomenon in Shetland, Estonia and the Bothnian Bay. Perhaps this principle can be applied here as well?

To the north of Gotland are the dangerous waters of *Gotska Sandön*, the most isolated island in the entire Baltic. Among possible sites in the waters of the Åland Isles are the characteristic red rock of *Lemböte* and the black skerries of *Kökar*. Both had maritime churches and chapels during the Middle Ages, Kökar even with a Franciscan monastery. Yet this might have ruled them out as sites of sailors' baptisms. Would not their use for the purposes of the Christian Church have disqualified them? It is to be suspected that sites associated strongly with official Christendom were avoided even in regular navigation *in the same way as priests and parsons were taboo* at sea. The prejudice against mentioning parsons, priests and related objects, or taking them on board is also emphasized in the first section above on Solheim's work.[145] The establishment of church buildings or chapels in places of importance for more or less "pagan" conceptions may once even have been intended as a means of "de-paganizing" them in this respect.

Otherwise a number of characteristic church buildings, above all church towers, served as the only widely visible sighting points on a flat coast, all of them also suitable for magical purposes. And as we have also seen, there were instances of *noa* referring to churches, for example that of the lighthouse *Långe Jan* on Öland, although the church of that name, dedicated to St John the Baptist, as mentioned above, had already been long gone. But its memory lingered on in maritime language. It was then replaced rather late as a seamark by the lighthouse.

Other sites may have qualified solely on account of their significance in maritime tradition. As Henningsen points out, they need not have been exceptionally dangerous, but only highly visible and have served the function of marking a transition of some kind. With regard to my investigation area

of Norrland, I would like in particular to point out the following: from the Stockholm area northward the islands of *Arholma* and Örskär; in Uppland *Storjungfrun (*see the discussion on *Jungfru* names; this island also bore the name *Helgön*, 'the holy island',[146] or simply *Stora Känningen*, roughly 'the great landmark at sea'); the peninsula; the former island of *Hornslandet*, which is the ancient *Arnön*, almost certainly then tabooed and gone, except in settlement names, with nearby *Agön* island and *Kuggören*, an islet, all belonging to Hälsingland; further on the islands of *Bremön* in Medelpad, *Härnön, Högbonden* (see above on *Bonden* names), *Ulvön* ('Wolf's island'; see Solheim above on animal names), all three in parts of Ångermanland; and finally in Västerbotten: possibly *Holmön*, a large island group, and definitely the cape of *Bjuröklubb*, according to Olaus Magnus in 1555 "the crowned rock", comparing it in this respect with Blå Jungfrun much further south. The latter has a name derived from a village, Bjurön, in the vicinity, which appears to be secondary. It may instead have carried a tabooed name. This could be indicated by the harbour inlet *Jungfruhamn* with a presumably late medieval churchyard. If it does not refer to the Holy Virgin,[147] it could mean that the original name of the rock was indeed *Jungfrun*.[148]

To my knowledge, no records of regular baptism at these sites have been preserved. They are not known to have a ritual function, if there ever was any. On the other hand, certain passages in the Norrland fairwaters, including all of the sites I have mentioned, have been considered particularly important to long-distance shipping in oral tradition. Their cognitive role inland, however, is even less clear. In any case, most of them are known as sites of legends, maritime or otherwise (more below).

As Henningsen states,[149] *customs on board foreign ships passing the coast must have been little known by a local population.* The lack of place names denoting the ceremony (above) is a sign of that. As we already know, only *Hønsepolden* exists at Samsø in Denmark.

On the other hand, the local fishermen would know their own ritual passages for the introduction or initiation of the novices into the crew. These 'second-rate' sites constitute an independent subject for a survey, which is still a desideratum for the North – apart from Norway, thanks to Svale Solheim. The sheer wealth of information supplied there could, however, never be paralleled in Sweden. Very probably the situation is the same in Denmark or Finland. It is too late.

These sites of sailors' baptisms are often dangerous for shipping, on account of currents, exposed banks, and rocks under water. Nevertheless, Henningsen rejects this aspect as a prime factor. On the other hand, the situation of the sites corresponds well with zones of transition to new coasts with different coastal contours. Sometimes such zones mean a demand for pilotage among unexperienced skippers. In a few cases, they are part of the

borders between those "cognitive worlds" I have called *transport zones*, or, on a smaller scale, *maritime cultural areas* or *regions*. Lindesnes, Kullen, Falsterbo, Cape Maléas, the Straits of Messina, Gibraltar, Cape Horn and the Cape of Good Hope are prime examples of such places at borders.[150] Yet even smaller and less conspicuous sites could have a similar local or regional significance, according to principles of the kind set forth in Solheim's work.

The sites for the dissemination of tradition

The universal ritual behaviour of baptism cannot reasonably have started exclusively with the *Hansa* or with a sole sixteenth-century crossing of the equator in AD 1539 on a French ship, although Henningsen's comprehensive sources[151] do not permit any further expansion on this theme. Contrary to what one might expect, Olaus Magnus did not mention the custom in 1555, although he was aware of the maritime magic of Blå Jungfrun.

My suggestion is that the widespread custom is not documented because *it belonged to the deck people, not to the skippers or the literate class*. The latter groups were perhaps forced to accept it for the same reasons that the Roman Senate accepted the *saturnalia*. Such a suspicion is not without some support in the available sources. In the latter part of the seventeenth century, various authorities, for example the Dutch East India Company or the Nordic governments, actually issued legal bans on baptism at sea – all in vain.[152] Sailors wanted to keep the custom and that urge was too strong.

Whether or not such rites were performed in the ancient Mediterranean is not known.[153] There are certain parallels between sacrificial sites and those of baptism, not only in the Mediterranean. Generally, sailing routes passed high promontories where temples were often located.[154]

> Specific cultic practice varies among different seafaring societies, but usually involves some sort of sacrifice, offering, prayer, libation, or vow at stages in the voyage which require sacred protection. This type of cultic activity when traversing a cultural or geographic threshold, or liminal zone, is common on land as well, as a type of rite of passage.[155]

These "promontory shrines"[156] were often found in exceptionally strategic locations at sea. In shipping, this may have meant either landing to give offerings at the temple, or performing the act at sea while passing the point. "These shrines not only continued the sailor's link to their tutelary deities away from port; they also marked particularly dangerous areas, provided a land-bearing to aid navigation from the water, or commemorated a wrecked vessel."[157]

Yet the wealth of stone anchors and certain kinds of pottery found may also indicate regular offerings in open water. In later times, the former bap-

tismal sites became known as important maritime passages and sighting points, even during antiquity and the Middle Ages. In most cases, they had temples, later chapels.

In Roman Western Europe, we know of a *Promontorium Herculis* somewhere in southwest England. The name probably pointed to an indigenous version of Hercules. Perhaps this was Hartland Point in Devon.

Capes and islands named after medieval saints are also interesting in this regard, even though the ceremony of baptism, as we have indicated, could conflict with official Christendom.[158] However, what we may consider as possible sites have been interpreted in religious terms in both cases, with dedications to ancient gods as well as to Christian saints. We know next to nothing in this connection of folklore or the more popular forms of veneration or "cosmological" conceptions. One of my studies has been devoted to drawing a parallel between the sacrificial sites of the Mediterranean and baptismal sites.[159] In a certain sense, the baptism of sailors meant an offering as well.

Some sites of baptism were conspicuous by way of their dramatic features. Others might be situated in border zones for different phenomena, or at the start of a crossing of a larger expanse of water. Some of their natural features presumably marked important gathering places. Some sites may have served as melting pots for different types of communication by virtue of a nearby harbour function.

The lure of such sites could have absorbed and localized tales of giants and other beings of traditional folklore from deep inland, such as *Spårö* on the Småland coast of Sweden.[160] These sites accordingly occupy a very special place in popular tradition in general. They seem to form a kind of interaction zone almost as important as port cities, and possibly in a more mutual way. By way of the intercourse between sailors and local people at the most important rest harbours, such as the abovementioned straits of *Spårö sund*, legends and tales were spread not only among the sailors but also in the surrounding area, ultimately even farther inland.

A resting harbour of this type, with scores of sailing ships and crews held up there for weeks on end, is a communication node of different kinds, some even of a formal character. Countryside harbours of this kind were also informal postal stations and sites for taking passengers on board or finding one's own transport vessel, to enumerate only a few of their communicative aspects. This does not pertain only to harbours fairly well known in written sources. A tentative question has been posed on such a small loading site in Dalsland, *Bodane* on Lake Vänern, and its relation to the present unusually rich local distribution of folklore.[161]

I myself have had a number of experiences of otherwise inexplicable accumulations of all kinds of oral tradition in the vicinity of several small

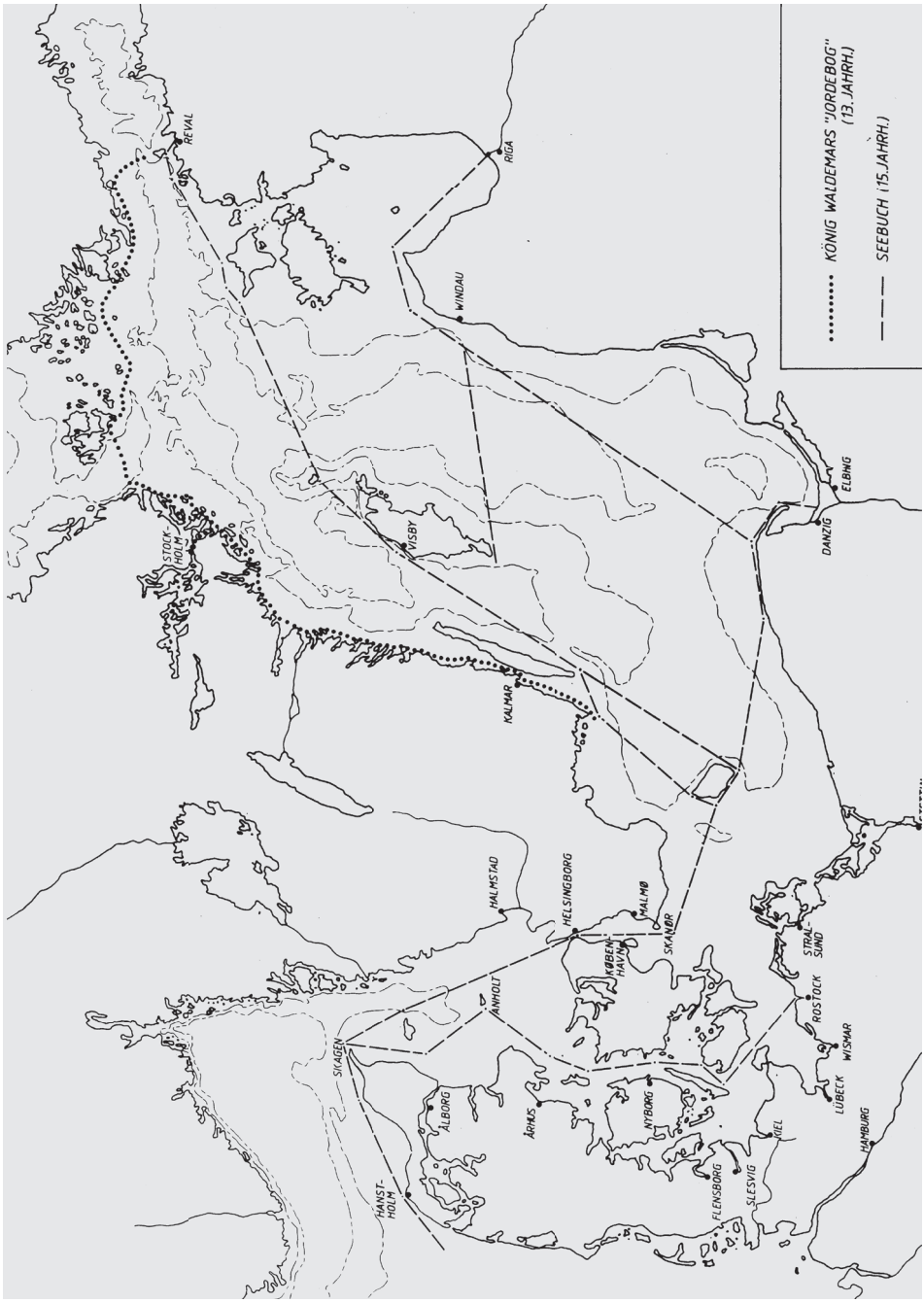

Fig. 9. The Baltic routes of the High Middle Ages, comparing part of the sequence of the tax register of King Valdemar of ca. AD 1300 with the Seebuch of ca. AD 1500. (After Crumlin-Pedersen 1983)

harbours along the Norrland coast of Sweden, which was once my primary survey area. It is a pity that this was an extremely secondary subject in that survey of the years 1975–1982. This may mean that it is not enough to assume that only the conspicuous sites are of current interest.

The Norwegian archaeologist Frans-Arne Stylegar has analysed the question of the significance of harbours for the exchange of ideas in several interesting texts.[162] The area of his concern is the aforementioned peninsula of *Lindesnes* and its environment in Vest-Agder. The starting point is the well-known story of *Åslaug Kråka*, who is supposed to have married the famous Danish King Ragnar Lodbrok. In the earliest popular texts of the area, the later queen was a shepherdess at *Spangereid*, the narrow portage at the root of the peninsula. The story includes a number of mythical elements which would appear to make the task of looking for a localization in reality a rather uninteresting endeavour.

However, Stylegar approached the story's structure in quite another way. He showed why it is likely that the tale and its mythical elements unite several disparate sources, the origins of which other scholars have discussed separately. The elements thus obviously represent different backgrounds of the continent: Denmark, England and the Orkneys. The combination of the elements has presumably occurred elsewhere in yet another environment. Such an amalgamation would for various reasons be reasonable in southernmost Norway.

Moreover, the legendary Danish king, who might not even have existed, and his union with Kråka may symbolize a situation distant in time when a Danish power took possession of Norway. In myth, such events are often transformed into marriage. The area of Lindesnes appears to have marked the western boundary of the influence of the Danish realm during some periods of protohistory. Moreover, as we have seen, the promontory of Lindesnes is an exceptionally important transit point in navigation, and was in later times a fairly well-known site of baptism at sea. The natural features of the austere rocks ploughing the North Atlantic swell are impressive at the southernmost point of the mainland of Norway. A metaphorical marriage between sea and land there would not have been out of place.

The fact that the disparate elements of the story have been brought together to point out a well localized site may indicate that the elements arrived here in the minds of people. The only place where this could have happened in the Middle Ages would have been a harbour, with its extraordinary capacity to bring people together from great distances. There is indeed such a harbour at *Selør* or *Korshamn* to the west of Lindesnes, which can be demonstrated to have been used frequently as an emergency or resting harbour. Bad weather and contrary winds at Lindesnes could in fact bring large numbers of people together for weeks and even as long as a month. This is at least a possible site

where the elements of the legend could have been brought together to form a coherent story. The idle time in the harbour could very plausibly have been spent telling stories of the kind known in Norse tradition during the Middle Ages. The story would have been finished as an art product by a *skald*, or storyteller, associated with an aristocratic environment in the vicinity. There may not be so many alternatives in this area: possibly at the royal manor of *Huseby*, Lista. Popular living tradition in the area and the Icelandic/Norse category of *fornaldarsögur* transferred this tale to the first learned records of the seventeenth century by way of the scholar Tormod Torfæus.

This presentation of the potentially communicative role of harbours or havens may appear peripheral in this connection, but such an assumption would be amiss. The function of an important harbour or haven is at the foundation of what I have called *centres of maritime culture*. Their meaning is not that of sites where there is only a background in fishing or only in shipping, but where *all the facets of maritime culture came together*. These centres were an answer to the elementary need for social intercourse, for recent news on destinations, etc., among the crews of ships. To give these centres their proper place in this regard, it is necessary to sketch a process of a transfer of custom.

As already pointed out, Svale Solheim called attention to the fact that prejudices among sailors closely resembled those of fishermen: "Det er tydeleg at fordomar hjå sjøfolk stort sett har vori dei same som hjå fiskarar."[163]

The transfer of a custom originally rooted in fishing, for example elementary initiation rites, to the sailing community must have taken place at such nodes of maritime culture. Secondly, the cognitive heritage of fishing must have been exceptionally rich and active at the time of transfer.

This heritage, including the *taboo* complex and the rites, was prevalent, and in later times most active, in the Norse orbit, especially in Norway, Shetland and The Faroes. For the new custom to be adopted, the sailors would probably have been of the same people as the fishermen, or else had the same language. Norway itself is thus a main area of interest as a place where there is such a wealth of living fishermen taboos and initiation rites as would be compatible with a transfer to another sphere. Denmark and Sweden, although fishing nations, are far behind, as has been already pointed out. On the other hand, shipping is international. Such an obvious site as *Kullen* would still be interesting as a possible site of transfer from fishing to shipping in this context.

Yet in the sense of their connection with the Hanse, Norwegian sites such as Lindesnes can also be considered as possible sites of transfer. The different terms *hønse*, *hanse*, *hänseln*, the same in most of the Northern languages, already themselves point to an initial transfer within the Hanseatic orbit, as Henningsen assumes. This is not only because of the similarity between the different forms of the term *hanse*, which has its linguistic origins in

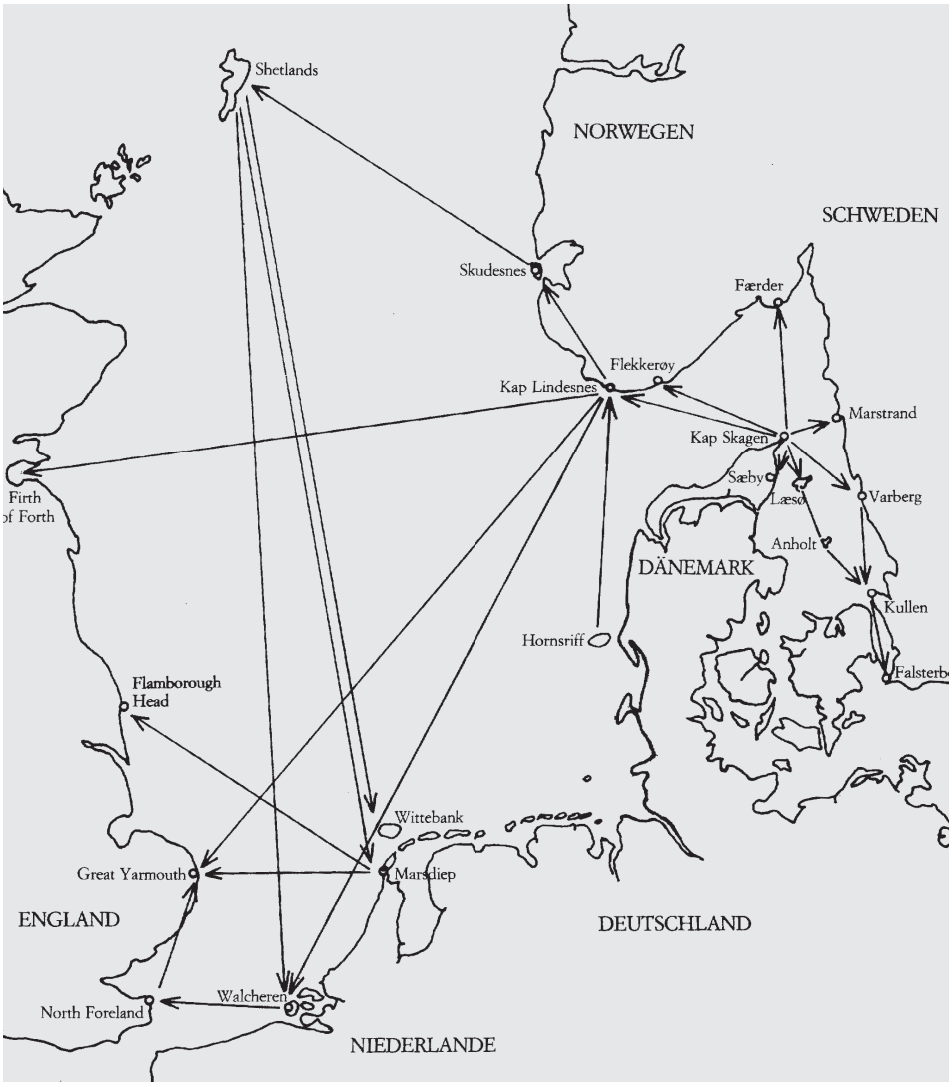

Fig. 10. The construction of the compass lines of the 1543 Caerte van oostlant towards Lindesnes, de Neze, Kullen, de Kol, The Farmer, etc., and Skagen, The Scaw. (After Lang 1986)

Low German itself, but also, and even more importantly, because the *Hanse* served in Scandinavia as a kind of contact interface with such active fishing communities. The most profitable import product of the *Hanse* from Norway, indeed from all of Scandinavia, was fish. Contact was thus inevitable. And Norwegian fishermen must have gone to sea as sailors with their Hanseatic, as well as later with their Dutch, customers. This would have applied to fishing people along the entire Norwegian sailing route of the *Hanse*, perhaps even to some of the Northern Norwegians who above all supplied

the staple commodity of dried cod. The European market for fish supplied by the *Hanse* was what caused the great booms in Norwegian fishing, first in the thirteenth century and again, after the Great Plague, in the fifteenth.

A third prerequisite for a local transfer is that the site involved can be shown to be a site of baptism at sea in historical times. A fourth might be that such a site was extraordinarily important in a symbolic sense, and conspicuous as a natural monument.

In all of these boom periods, the ancient centres of maritime culture were there along the route to the entrepot of Bergen. We do not know if they were ever used as sites of baptism during these periods. That is not at all surprising, considering the general absence of anything resembling records of such behaviour. Two sites immediately seem plausible, the area at *Bukken* on the inshore route to Bergen,[164] and the area of *Lindesnes* at the crossroads between the Atlantic and the Baltic. Is their character as maritime cultural centres sufficient for both of them to have functioned according to this hypothetical scenario? *Bukken* may seem to be a less conspicuous place than Lindesnes in most respects, but it is still important.

Perhaps *Lindenes* possessed some good qualifications for such a transfer from fishing to sailing communities. If this is the case, we would point to the unusually strong occurrence of high medieval wrecks in the harbour of Selør/Korshamn at Lindesnes.[165] And the first mention of *corshaun* is, as we remember, in AD 1435. The first mention of a baptism at sea is in AD 1539. It took place on board a French ship as it was crossing the equator.[166] Does the interval leave enough time for the custom to have spread from the North to the South? There is obviously no indigenous organization in the North that could have managed this dissemination. However, the Hanse was a self-evident agent of almost any international contact along the coasts of Western Europe. What is more, it was an institution much attuned to initiation ceremonies among guilds, known among the German merchants in Bergen from the 1350s onward, if not before.

It remains to be conjectured that among the deck crews of the Hanseatic ships there were already several Northerners, perhaps even on board the French ship in 1539. Whatever their origin, the custom had spread amongst the Romance maritime nations by that time.

Many arguments can be put forward to undermine these suggestions. The Lindesnes site was unfortunately not recorded explicitly as a site of baptism until rather late, in fact not until the nineteenth century. However, English sailors of the seventeenth century translated *Bispen* and *Sveinane*, the names of the dangerous rocks at the approach to the harbour Selør and the protected inner route at *The Naze*, as *The Bishop and His Clerks.* Svale Solhem[167] has shown that *Sveinane* do not refer just to clergy, that is, followers of the *Bispen*, *The Bishop*. Rather, they are supposed to remind the crew of the role of the

novice in a ceremony of initiation on approaching this site. *Sveinane* means 'the journeymen', like the Norwegian dialect word *skårunger*. It was there that their *svennestykke* or *skårungsstykke*, their 'masterpiece' would be presented. This must refer to baptism or some similar ritual. The rocks of *Sveinane* are marked on several well-known maps of the area at least as far back as 1723 and 1728. If this interpretation is accepted, it means that the tradition of baptism is much earlier than the first recording of it, although this reference is more to a ceremony practised by local people than by international sailors.

Noa names, as we have already seen, are curiously absent from the Cape of Lindenes. This is quite peculiar, as this impressive tip of land simply should have had one. Perhaps it has simply not been discovered. Such a name may have been incorporated in other name contexts than where it would be expected. The mechanisms of *noa* names is in any case apparent in *Svinør*, 'swine ridge'; with *ør* referring to 'gravel', the name of the harbour to the east of Lindenes. It is more doubtful whether the seal ever had the same magical significance in this area as in the far North. That is why it is not immediately clear whether the other important harbour, *Selør*, 'seal gravel ridge', to the west of the cape, contains a *noa* element.

The sign of the cross was invoked by another term for the same somewhat extended area in *Korshamn*, 'harbour of the cross'. However, *Selør* appears to be the ancient name. Perhaps *Korshamn* was intended as an antidote against a strong old taboo – strong enough ultimately to survive? – or perhaps against a name other than Selør, now no longer known? Such names as *Korshamn*, of which there are at least four high medieval examples spread around the North, may represent the intentional efforts of the priestly caste during the Middle Ages to counteract what they must have termed pagan superstition. Perhaps a more desirable and approved name, from an ecclesiastical point of view, was imagined to do the job. This conjecture does not seem entirely impossible, considering the location of other occurrences of the name in the North. During the High Middle Ages, there was a strong urge among the Mendicant Friars, in particular the Franciscans, towards maritime interests involving fishing scamps, even to the point of founding monasteries in such surroundings, if the views of Jarl Gallèn are to be accepted.[168] I think they are.

The area of Lindesnes displays fewer of the recorded fishing traditions associated with *taboos* than most other parts of Norway, according to Solheim. This fact was linked with the lack of *noa* names for the mackerel, which was the species particularly associated with this area.[169] On the other hand, the mackerel is a fish occurring in schools, and we have learnt that fish taboos mostly concern fish species that are caught individually.

On the other hand, we have got at least the name *Sveinane* to show that such a tradition was local. Furthermore, there is probably much more to register of such tradition than what was known to Svale Solheim. If there really is a lack of current traditions in Vest-Agder as compared to other areas of

Norway, the reason may be that this area was modernized by rationalized fishing industries, some exceptionally early,[170] and the extremely intense internationalized sailing ship traffic of the last centuries. It is also possible that the active missionary movements of religious dissenters of the late nineteenth century may have actively and successfully fought the tradition as semi-pagan superstition. These are just a few suggestions for possible explanations.

The development of particular sites of baptism for sailors can be sketched roughly as follows: In fishery and seafaring along the coasts, certain important and well visible promontories and rocks have been thought of as magically charged. Possibly their positions were considered liminal in *several* ways. The normal names of these sites were not to be uttered at sea. Instead, *noa* names were used. The promontories were so dangerous that one was not even supposed to fix them with one's gaze, as in the case of Kinnekulle in Lake Vänern.

Since these sites marked stages on longer journeys, they served as suitable points for teaching newcomers at sea the norms of the sea and its customs. The aim was to induce the novices to adhere to the unwritten laws of life as a sailor and thereby to be socialized as such. An important step was for the novice to show that he had grasped the norms. In this context, taboos played an important role. The actual practice of the custom took the form of an initiation ceremony, a sacrifice, baptism or suchlike. It was a kind of rite of passage. Both the sacrifice and the baptism are found in the ceremonies that have been described. A sacrifice could often be characterized as a substitute for a baptism. With an offering, one was buying oneself free from actual baptism. *Hønse*, 'paying your footing', means exactly this. The sacrifice is made to the crew, not to the Powers. Very plausibly, however, *this sacrifice was the original motive in the far distant past.*

To transfer those simple, semi-pagan customs from the subarctic North to a Catholic ship at the equator is not as easy as I might appear to have made it above. Of the ceremony taking place on Wednesday, 11 May, in AD 1539, for example, the brothers Parmentier stated that fifty men on board the vessel received the accolade, *furent faits chevaliers*, which is not quite what we have been thinking of in the North. Besides, it is related that the Mass, called *Salve sancta parens*, was sung after the ceremony and a solemn banquet followed in the night. It was not until AD 1557 that the next sailors' baptism was recorded and the German term *hänseln* was used in this connection for the first time, at least in connection with baptism at the Line.[171]

It is quite plausible that we may have to distinguish between baptism at the Line as well as other indefinite places on the open sea and the actual *hönsing* at quite specifically located coastal sites in Northern Europe. Yet some primary origin must in any case be sought in Europe, as Henningsen claims.

An important postulate in all maritime contexts, to my mind, is the notion that all seafaring is by nature international. A reasonable consequence, then, is that maritime culture must be considered from an international perspective. This claim can of course be doubted or opposed. It is always possible to refer to specific traits of a local or regional character. However, I claim that most of the salient factors are universal to maritime cultures, and owe their dissemination to this international contact network. The other postulate is that the primary layer of maritime cultures was laid by fishermen and spread from there to sailors. There may be a few instances of customs disseminated in the opposite direction but they appear to be the exceptions to the rule.

There is at least a reasonable likelihood that the custom of sailors' baptisms at sea was a ceremony with Nordic origins. Its background would then still be among the initiation rites of fishermen.

The most interesting sites for such origins would certainly be Kullen, Lindesnes and Skagen (figs. 9–10). From the navigational point of view, Skagen and Lindesnes would be the most suitable sites. Those that are best visible are Lindesnes and Kullen. The traditional function of a border is strongest at Lindesnes, and somewhat less so at Skagen. The number of recorded baptisms is by far the largest at Kullen during later times, but this may not have any bearing on the actual origin.

My guess is that the intensity at Kullen reflects the powerful increase in Dutch traffic on the Baltic at the end of the sixteenth century. In the same way, The Sound, Öresund, was of current interest as the main passage from the fifteenth century onward. During the first part of that century, important new port cities were established in the area, and the old ones were favoured by state policy in Denmark. The gradual inception of the Sound customs began in the 1430s/1440s. The critical point for Westerners was to double the Cape of Skagen. To be sure, the sheltered passage by way of Limfjorden, right through Jutland, may have been impossible on a larger scale after the 1150s. However, it is not entirely clear that this was the case. At any rate, ships making the uninterrupted voyage from the western side were known as *ummelandsfare(re)*, 'seafarers who double the land', which of course means Skagen, the Skaw. This concept was first mentioned in AD 1251. The cog, a new vessel type at the time, is known to have been used in the endeavour to accomplish the dangerous passage along the sandy spits and beaches exposed to westerlies. Remnants of those that did not succeed in ca. AD 1200 have been found in the sands of Northern Jutland.[172] Other ways across the North Sea had already been in use for hundreds of years, since the beginnings of sailing in the North. Some routes went directly to Southern Norway, that is, Lindesnes. Other means of reaching the Baltic would have included sailing out to sea, with Jutland well off the lee quarter, directly to the western coast of present-day Sweden (Bohuslän). In this pattern well-known to history, the three important points of Skagen, Lindesnes and Kullen are fairly equal

alternatives for the inception of the sailor's baptism. If we look at the conditions of the crucial fifteenth century, we find no proof that any of these points had precedence over the others.

Some of these arguments are partly intuitive, however. None but the most general statements can be made on this matter. The point of departure is thus that customs in seafaring are usually closely linked to those in fishing. The tentative conclusions would not be possible anyway without the recorded dependence on sea and coast among the peoples and settlements of the North throughout their known prehistory and history.[173] Neither would it be possible without a deeper understanding of the common contexts of fishermen, pilots and common sailors. One of the pillars for understanding has been the works on linguistics, folklore and ethnology by Jöran Sahlgren, Svale Solheim and Per Hovda, the second those by Henning Henningsen.[174] The interrelationships between those pillars have not yet been examined. And the possible role of some specific sites in the dissemination of rituals has not even been indicated.

As a final conclusion to this section, it could be said that there is a distinct possibility that the customs of initiation and baptism at sea are of Nordic and Baltic origin. This partly intuitive conclusion cannot yet be substantiated except in a very general sense.

To greet and to *hanse* – to memorize at a passage

The ceremony thought to have been carried out at the place called *Sveinane*, referred to above, is basically one of the elements of the everyday practice of fishermen. As we know from extensive ethnological experience, the small ceremonies in the landscape served as a way of memorizing the significance of the respective points or sites. The points and their names served as *mnemotechnic pegs.*[175] A border was to be indicated, or passing fishermen and their *skårunger* had to look out. In spite of Henningsen's objections,[176] concerning more illustrious sites of baptism it has not always been considered necessary to question Solheim's impression[177] that some more mundane points are indeed particularly dangerous in navigation. They are indeed! The only question is: were they more dangerous than a lot of others which were in no way considered *taboo* or given a *noa* name? My underlying scepticism arises from the fact that the naming process was not a work of nature, but a cultural and social process.

The expected behaviour is some kind of bodily act. One example is the greeting by removing one's cap at *Bagarstenen* at the entrance to Marstrand, Bohuslän.[178] Children were taught this ceremony by their elders. This could involve being made aware of their duties by way of shouts or insinuating invectives. Similarly, one was supposed to call out *Mössan av!*, 'Caps off', or *Hurra!* at certain points near Bergen (oral statements). At a tip of the land

on the *Blindleia* route in the archipelago of Lillesand, Aust-Agder, there is a stone called *Per Ostibrag*. When people passed this site, they were supposed to rise in the boat, remove their caps and say: *Goddag, Per Ostibrag!* Mostly only fragments are still remembered. At Kvåsefjorden in the western part of the same route, one was to *hattes av*, 'take off your headgear', at *Mariskjær*, but the precise site is unknown today.[179]

Henning Henningsen cited many examples of identical customs, even at sites of baptism.[180] At the passage of Stevns on Zealand, Denmark, the greeting was *Gooden Dag, Kasper!*[181] Svale Solheim recorded yet another striking custom: at the skerry *Skomakaren*, one was expected to offer a small log to serve as *pligg åt skomakaren*, 'pegs for the shoemaker'.[182] That ceremony has already been referred to in this text as a type of sacrifice.

The greeting was formerly often treated as a joke with the young and unexperienced fishermen. It is from Trøndelag and Northern Norway that Solheim took the term *skårungar*, or something similar, for boys on their first journey.[183] At the fishing grounds at Roan in Trøndelag, he learned that "Skåronga va slike som itj hadd vore med på sjøen før. Dei blei kalla det te dei hadd hansa. Dem treiv å narra dem på somm plassan." ("Skåronga were those who had not been on the sea before. They were called that until they had been initiated [here the verb hanse was used]. They used to take them in at certain places.") And further: "Når ein skårunge vart narra til å helsa eller gjera noko anna unnerleg, så kalla dei dette for 'skårungsstykket' hans." ("When a skårunge was taken in to greet or to do some other peculiar thing, they called this his skårungsstykke.") This term is reminiscent of *svennestykket*, 'the masterpiece', which the artisan journeymen had to make as an exam to acquire their certificate, the *svennebrev*.

This is the line of thought referred to above on the significance of the *Sveinane* rocks outside Lindesnes. For example, one was supposed to *lese for Bispen*, 'be confirmed by the Bishop'. We already know what site is referred to at the *svennestykke* of *Sveinane*. Corresponding concepts are known in other maritime environments of the North. In Swedish, *skårungsstykke* and *svennestykke* would translate roughly as *gesällprov*. In Swedish and Finnish fairwaters, the same meaning as *skårung* and *sveinar* (*svenner*) is transmitted as the place-name element *Gesäll-*, from the German *Geselle*, 'journeyman'.

The ceremony of greeting and similar simple acts of initiation is obviously the final remnant of whatever customs were carried out at the sites of baptism and sacrifices. It could plausibly also have been the first element of the original rite. Nowadays, it is the only remainder of a tradition normally remembered jokingly.

The "small" and mundane points do play an exceedingly important role in the maritime cultural landscape. They mark the actual sailing routes in much greater detail than any other kind of survey: "Vi har her ei sikker rettesnor

til å kartleggja dei gamle ferdslevegane langs kysten vår." ("Here we have got a secure clue to chart the old transport routes along our coast.")[184]

Often these points are found at the entrances to harbours and other nodes in the landscape. This kind of tradition may in many cases not even be recorded. In tradition it sometimes emerges only in connection with the question of why the stone or skerry is called by this peculiar name, for example *Bagarstenen* above. The *bagare*, 'baker', referred to is possibly quite irrelevant. On the other hand, the answer will reveal that the name reminds the informant of a greeting accompanied by the removal of caps. It must simply be the characteristic bakers' hat that is alluded to. It is a distinct possibility that most artisans referred to in place names are intended to mark out the site in the same way as in other initiations. All artisans were associated with exams and initiations like the *hansing/hønsing*.

The sites of initiation and baptism are a maritime counterpart to the so-called *territorial passage rites* treated by Arnold van Gennep in his classical work.[185] You pass an important boundary in time and space, and in the process mark the passage with a certain ritual act or mode of behaviour.

Obviously, rites of *territorial passage* were as essential on the path to the sea as in the boat. Man was then in a *liminal state*, in a boundary area or in a transition phase between sea and land.[186] To an extent, the process can also be described as a *rite of separation*. This occurs when you leave a certain state and cross the border into another.[187] The demand for ritual can be replaced only by the transition to an application of various taboos. On the way to the boat, it is dangerous to meet a woman or a priest, to see a clawed animal or a black object or to be wished good luck in fishing. All of this had to be avoided. But it was a social norm that everyone was aware of. If a woman encountered a fisherman in Norway, she would have been instantly aware of the danger posed to him, and would have said *Tvi vale*, the equivalent of spitting, or something similar with an apotropæic meaning. There are in fact several forms of such ill-averting behaviour and sayings in every language. In Swedish, for example, I am familiar with *Tvi vale*, *Kors i taket!*, *Ta i trä!*, etc.

In the worst case, the fisherman might just go back home. But there are no rules without exceptions. Certain women on the Agder coast of Norway may be *goe i møde*, 'good to meet'.[188] As mentioned in the review of Solheim's work, but also according to my own experience, some of these women would be suspected of belonging to a category of stigmatized or special women, in some senses outside society.[189] Suffice it to say that such exceptions did not occur by chance. They followed a social pattern.

As soon as you were on board, the rules went into effect. Suddenly another word was used for the knife and the oar, as well as for the anchor and the seal. The mountains in the fjord were called by other names than before. You al-

most spoke another language, as has been mentioned above, although maybe essentially only the words were different: there was rarely an entirely new grammar or syntax. In fact, however, instances of such far-reaching changes have also been observed. As an example of changed (inverted) word order, an adjective could be placed after a noun, as in a few place names referred to above, for example *Holmen Grå*, *Landet gode*. The aim was for you and your fellow fishermen to distort the vision and hearing of the 'forces' or 'powers', whoever or whatever they were.

The most important theory concerning the application of this kind of belief system was presented by the anthropologists Bronislaw Malinowski and Alfred R. Radcliffe-Brown.[190] This explanatory theory is known as the *anxiety-ritual theory*. According to the two anthropologists, the intensity of the rituals was clearly related to the mariners' feelings towards their environment. The rituals on the dangerous open sea were much more intense than the inshore rituals in less dramatic settings. This is of course a plausible thought. Danger and insecurity were at the core:

> An interesting and crucial text is provided by fishing in the Trobriand Islands and its magic. While in the villages on the inner Lagoon fishing is done in an easy and absolutely reliable manner by the method of poisoning, yielding abundant results without danger and uncertainty, there are on the shores of the open sea dangerous modes of fishing and also certain types in which the yield varies greatly according to whether shoals of fish appear or not. It is most significant that in the Lagoon fishing, where man can rely completely upon his knowledge and skill, magic does not exist, while in the open sea fishing, full of danger and uncertainty, there is extensive magical ritual to secure safety and good results.[191]

Functionalists like Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown were almost exclusively interested in the present, where all cultural features have a function and, accordingly, in an extreme case, if you take one (important) feature away, the whole structure may collapse. Solheim outlined the same kind of explanation in his works.[192] The reason for the taboos on mentioning certain place names were, according to him, "purely practical considerations, according to the role these different localities played for fishing and transport".[193] This is the functionalist view. Many have followed it in different guises.[194] Very little reflection – if any – on the *historical deep dimension* entered into this concept of culture, which was natural at the time of its introduction as a reaction against some of the preceding excesses of historicism. In this case one could ask: would the dangers have been less in the past, especially in the distant past? It seems likely that quite the opposite was true.

The contrast between land and sea and the transition from one to the other

are indeed inside the people who carried out these processes physically. The fishermen never worked full-time as such in the past. They also participated in land-based economies with different rules. This is a salient point well expressed by Svale Solheim in his summary:[195]

> When fishermen in the old days were at sea fishing, they had the feeling that the work itself was something solemn, something entirely outside the usual. Doubtless they felt as if they were in a world of its own, in another existence. But life in this other existence was full of tension and fear. At all times, the fisherman had to be on his guard, since all around him lurked strong and dangerous powers that only waited for an opportunity to harm him. And harm meant the same as abortive fishing, wrecking and loss of men.
>
> When he came back on land and managed the catch and the tools, there was still a necessity to be prudent. Because here as well, there were dangerous powers lying in wait and trying to destroy his boat, his implements and his catch. The fishers sometimes imagined "powers" as more or less clearly shaped supernatural beings. They had to be very careful about them in all respects; otherwise they were tricky to meet. But all kinds of "evil" people could also be counted as adversaries: sorcerers, competitors, enemies, bad neighbours. "Great people", priests and other officials were in their way everywhere and always, and in several respects made demands on them, claims for a part of the income they had caught from the sea.
>
> Fishermen were at the same time peasants, they had responsibility for small farms and cattle and crops to care for. Whenever they were working as fishermen, they could never feel quite safe about what they owned and loved. Something could quite easily happen at home on the farm with the crops, the cattle or the household. The cattle could go astray or be taken by beasts of prey or other evil things.
>
> The fishermen always felt ill at ease when their thoughts centred on evil and dangerous things. And those evil thoughts were triggered if someone talked about such matters that were connected with what was dangerous. The fishermen believed in the saying that if you talk about the trolls they are very close. We must remember that, in the old days, people did not clearly distinguish between conceptions and realities. It is probable that the two were intertwined in their consciousness. (my translation)

A lot of this reveals a deep personal acquaintance with the conditions of the old days. Those old days are in fact not always very far back in time.

It is seldom that a sailor lacks roots on land. Everyday maritime culture in the past was characterized by combinations of industries. Starting in Agder in Southern Norway, Bråstad[196] refers to *mangesysleriet*, 'the multiple duty economy'. The Danish ethnologist Poul Holm[197] has the same conception in his extensive work on maritime cultures in the Kattegatt-Skagerak area, and he shows the latitude of variations. The same goes for Northern Norway.[198] There are also expressions of this known from a large lake like Vänern which I have studied for quite some time.[199] The classical saying invented by the Swedish radio reporter and author Lars Madsén: *det går en tamp mellan bondens lada och fiskarens sjöbod*, 'there is a rope between the barn of the farmer and the boathouse of the fisherman', refers precisely to Lake Vänern.[200]

My appreciation of the material is somewhat different from Solheim's. But customs and attitudes that emerged long ago may need entirely different social motivations over time. Some stages of this evolution have been indicated here. The contrast, and subsequent dichotomy, between land and sea is found in the essence of maritime man himself.

Ritual rules at sea

According to my deliberations, these rules can be summarized briefly and, of course ideally, as follows:[201]

Principle:
What is visible on, can be taken from, or named in a certain way on land should never be visible, taken to, or be named in the same way on board and at sea. Lingustic and other associations with such phenomena, even if farfetched, are to be avoided.

With a conscious and well-controlled motive, however, you could break the taboo and create a particularly powerful magic.[202] Many good examples in this text illustrate this principle. To take ballast stones from the beach was not a good idea, since the vessel would be drawn to the origin of its ballast. On the other hand, if the ballast was taken farther inland, the vessel got a powerful addition for a successful journey throughout its life (Scotland).[203]

The application of this type of dualist magic not only concerns individual things or people but even folk groups which are imagined to represent the land, for example the sorcery performed by Finns and Samis at sea.[204]

Possible additional sub-rule:
A person who works at sea should never use or eat such food that is made at or lives in the sea. Since this sub-rule has not been mentioned before, and is fairly vaguely applied, it is important to add that it primarily takes its foundations from the abstention of old skippers from eating fish according to oral

Fig. 11. The forbidding rocks of Lindesnes, the southernmost point of Norway, from land. (Photo: Christer Westerdahl)

information, for example from Henning Henningsen himself, by way of Ole Crumlin-Pedersen.

A conditional sub-rule:
A place that is good for fishing or any other economic purpose must never be pointed out as such, for example in its name or in the way it is talked about. It should rather be pointed out *for being bad* in this or that respect. The same rule is valid in the reverse, a bad place should then be pointed out for being good.

Fundamentally, this is not only because a fisherman does not want to tell his colleague or anyone else about his best fishing ground, but also serves as a way of ingratiating oneself with the beings who control the place by surprising them. Any reversal could potentially be strong magic.

Conclusion

Thus I feel that what is relevant in this dichotomy of recent times with regard to how parts of the cognitive landscape in prehistory have been explained is the contrast between sea and land. What is forbidden at sea is primarily what represents land. The land and its looming cliffs were dangerous to man at sea. It should never be brought closer to the boat, by any means. The reverse, for anyone on land, is encountered to a much lesser degree. This dichotomy is typical of maritime cultures.

The contrast between land and sea expresses itself most strongly both in the liminal space of the boat deck, which represents the waterline at sea, and the likewise liminal space of the beach and the path from the settlement to the water's edge. These are dangerous areas where anything can happen or can cause something to happen at sea, good or evil. This ambiguity could, however, be used to one's advantage with the correct ritual procedures. Incarnations of either element, sea or land, could be actively manipulated to advantage on the other side. And, as I maintain, the seemingly fragmented 'prejudice' encountered in recent times would once have been a coherent system of belief.

Interestingly, we also encounter a trait common to fishing culture and inland hunting cultures in the circumpolar area: the veneration of a certain species. The halibut was the object of partly the same cultic practices as the bear and the reindeer. The bear, among other species, is implied in fishing taboos but in certain places it plays a special role related to its significance in hunting. I do not imply that this is typical or that there is any kind of direct continuity, but certainly there is a connection in similar subarctic conditions.

Of course, one could say that it is wrong to postulate a beginning in very long-ago times.[205] And perhaps the wealth of taboos is just an accumulated effect of a rather specific taboo in fishing and nothing else – not indicative of structural opposition between sea and land at all. Merely a curiosity among other taboos. This is a criticism that cannot be firmly declared false on theoretical grounds. The impression I have tried to inculcate here is the only argument. I think it is strong.

The arguments presented below, however, show that *the ancient monuments at the shores occur in almost exactly the same areas where records of taboos have been made among local fishermen.* The exceptions are mainly those of the historical extension of Scandinavian cultures.

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Notes:

1 E.g. Hunter 1994. For a retort, cf. Westerdahl 2008a and especially Stewart 2010: 1–69.
2 For a new and innovative perspective of human impressions of the sea as a living and unpredictable element, van de Noort 2011.
3 Westerdahl 1986 in German for a start, 2002a, 2002b, 2005a, 2005b, 2006a, 2008a, 2009, 2010a, 2010b, 2011c, 2011d, 2011e, etc. On the manifold maritime cultural landscape in general, Flatman 2011. This perspective has been applied to various elements of the maritime cultural landscape by the author, a river (2010d), ship building sites (2010e), the significance of shorelines (2011a), seamarks (2011b), archipelago burial places and chapels (2012), coastal stone mazes (2013b).
4 Westerdahl 1987, 1989, 2003, 2014b.
5 Westerdahl 2006b, on principles for the analysis of oral tradition. Cf. also Westerdahl 2015.
6 In Swedish by Löfgren in Honko & Löfgren 1981.
7 E.g. van Baal 1971, Bell 1992, Douglas 1984 (etc.), Grimes 1990, Humphrey & Laidlaw 1994, Ingold (ed.) 1994 (2005), Turner 1967, 1969, 1974, 1982, 1987 and 1990. But Steiner 1967 (1956) has always been helpful, in particular on the ambiguity of concepts such as 'sacred' and 'taboo'. The same goes for the mainly linguistic Edlund (ed.) 1992, including especially Hultkrantz 1992a (and 1992b).
8 Malinowski 1948, but with earlier attempts by the same author. His views have been widely known since about 1925 (Malinowski 1925). Oral information to the author by the maritime ethnologist Olof Hasslöf in 1993.
9 E.g. Poggie & Gersuny 1972, Poggie, Pollnac & Gersuny 1976, Mullen 1969, 1978. Cf. also Clark 1982, Poushinsky & Poushinsky 1973, Lummis 1983, Martin 1981.
10 Westerdahl 2014a.
11 Classical texts on bodily metaphors and categories, e.g. Lakoff 1987, 1999, Lakoff & Johnson 1980. Within maritime archaeology there is an obvious and early application in ship (-building) terminology. There has been a steadily growing realization of this interpretative potential in archaeology; see e.g. Rainbird 2010 (2008) on the body and the senses in landscape studies.
12 Sahlgren 1915, 1918, Modéer 1933, Hovda 1941a and 1941b, 1948, (1961).
13 As far back as 1887, Nyrop submitted an ingenious study on the power of the name.
14 Henningsen 1948, 1960, and in particular 1961.
15 Such as Hutchins 1995.
16 For a wider psychological scope, e.g. Turnbull 1990. A gender perspective in a maritime environment (the Faroes) is recorded by Vestergaard 1981.
17 Keesing 1981: 333.
18 Cf. Walens 1987.

19 Nielsen 1985, and especially Koch 1998, 1999.
20 Cf. Tvedt (chief ed.) 2006.
21 Haavio 1947.
22 Klokkervoll 2015: e.g. 138.
23 Klaatsch, e.g. 1922.
24 Nylén 1958.
25 E.g. Dahlström 1940, on Finnish inland place names of Karelia. Cf. Korpela 2008.
26 Westerdahl 2013b.
27 On ship graffiti, recently Westerdahl 2013a, Henningsen on boat processions and similar customs 1949, 1953, on votive model ships 1950a and 1950b.
28 Cf. also Solheim 1939.
29 Christiansen 1941.
30 Later pointed out in particular by Fenton 1969, but, of course, Solheim himself is aware of the similarity.
31 Nesheim 1953, Edlund 1989, 1992.
32 Cf. Broadbent 2010.
33 Solheim quoting the Estonian folklorist Oskar Loorits. Cf. Loorits 1931, 1935, 1939.
34 On the Faroes, Lockwood 1955.
35 Especially words found in the vocabulary of Jakobsen 1921.
36 Loorits opera cit.
37 Mullen 1969, 1978.
38 Briefly mentioned by Firth 1946, with later editions.
39 Barrère 1751: 136f.; discovered by Sahlgren 1918: 6.
40 Westerdahl 2014a.
41 Strøm 1762, part I: 536.
42 Who dealt even otherwise to a high degree with coastal conditions, and the appalling death rate among fishernen and pilots in Norway; Sundt 1976 (1852).
43 Solheim 1940: 14.
44 Loorits 1931: 455.
45 Vilkuna 1956. Cf. Anttonen 1996.
46 Nirvi 1944, Pentikäinen 2007.
47 Cf. Westerdahl 2008b.
48 Nirvi 1944, quoted from the review of Christiansen 1945: 8.
49 Gjessing 1936, Hallström 1938.
50 Cf. Sognnes 2006.
51 For an early account, cf. Fjellström 1755 (1981), and e.g. Pentikäinen 2007.
52 Nirvi 1944, after Christiansen 1945: 80.
53 On Southern Sweden, Kornhall 1968, on Bohuslän in Western Sweden, Ernby 1992, on Sweden in general, Svanberg 2000.
54 E.g. Fries 1992 on juniper, *Juniperus communis*, and, referring to Arbo, Høeg, e.g. 1974.
55 Sahlgren 1915: 5; quoting a note by Evald Lidén, another prominent linguist.
56 E.g. Modéer 1933: 34.
57 Cf. the European perspective, offered in Egardt 1962.
58 Beck 1973: 119f.
59 Cf. Westerdahl 2009, 2010a.
60 Already known in Norway in the fourteenth century; Låg 1982.
61 Sayce 1933: 6, referring to A. Hamilton on the Maori of New Zealand.
62 Burwash 1969.
63 Nirvi 1944, according to the summary by Christiansen 1945: 80.
64 For a penetrating ethnological study, see Frykman 1982 (1977).
65 Honko, Timonen & Branch (eds) 1993 (1995), Tolley (ed.) 2006, Pentikäinen 2007.

66 Christiansen 1941: 86.
67 E.g. Modéer 1933: 234.
68 Olof Hasslöf's opinions on this complex were well-known. A background in e.g. Hasslöf 1962, 1967.
69 Westerdahl 2012.
70 Nirvi 1944, after the summary of Christiansen 1945: 80.
71 Sahlgren 1915 or cf. the Hebraic injunction on the naming of God, e.g. Steiner 1967 (1956).
72 Modéer 1933: 34, on the skerries *Länsman*, *Fjärdingsman*, *Fogden*, etc. in Småland, Eastern Sweden.
73 Interestingly, this island group contains a famous Stone Age quarry, mainly for axes; Alsaker 1987. At least in medieval Norse tradition, the axe was associated with the thunder god (Thor). This association persisted in late historical times, e.g. in Sweden by calling prehistoric stone axes *åskviggar*, 'thunderbolts'. See also Hovda 1945 on the place name *Hespriholmane*.
74 The last is my own addition; Westerdahl 2003: 44.
75 Solheim 1940: 119.
76 E.g. Collinder 1964: 46.
77 MacGregor 1925: 247.
78 Folk-Lore XIII: 39.
78 Solheim 1940: 117: "Den forestillinga har vori utbreidd mellom fiskarane at havet og dermed fisken i havet var noko som høyrde jomfru Maria till, havet var stabburet hennar." ("That conception has been spread among the fishermen that the sea and thereby the fish in the sea was something that belonged to the Virgin Mary, the sea was her store-house.")
80 Sandklef 1973: 86–90, "Mej-Book på Fiske-Grunden Wäst om Onsala 1828".
81 Westerdahl 2003: 133.
82 Jakobsen 1901 in Aarbøger: 209.
83 Marwick 1929: *bairn*.
84 Folk-Lore XXXVIII: 178f.
85 Martin 1716: 15f.; MacGregor 1925: 208, after Solheim.
86 Martin op. cit.: 17f., after Solheim.
87 Westerdahl 2003: 75; Friberg 1938: 129.
88 Martin op. cit.: 279, after Solheim.
89 Martin op. cit: 275, after Solheim.
90 Skougaard 1804, I: 112, after Solheim.
91 Olaus Magnus 1555, book 2: ch. 23; transl. Peter Foote (Hakluyt Society series 1996–1998). "Præterea prope Aquilonare littus eius exurgit mons excelsus: quem nauticum vulgus vitandi infelicis ominis, & marinæ tempestatis gratia, Virginem vocat: atque in eius portu manentes certis munusculis puellis dari solitis, utpote chirothecis, sericeis zonis, & similibus, eas tanquam amico munere placant. Nec ingratum montis numen sentire videntur, prout aliquando factum meminit antiquitas. Voce lapsa iussum suisse donantem mutari portum, ne periclitaretur: & ita faciendo salvus factus est, ubi alii sunt perclitati. In eo monte certis anni temporibus dicitur esse conventus Aquilonarium maleficarum, ut examinant præstigia sua. Tardius ministerio dæmonum accedens, dira afficitur correptione. Sed hæc opinioni, non assertioni cedant."
92 Sahlgren 1918; continued by Modéer 1928.
93 In 1645, the Dane Ole Worm (Wormius) quoted the exiled Swedish Catholic author Vastovius (1708?) on this in his *Danicorum Monumentorum Libri Sex* (p. 18), but unfortunately excluded one single word, thus perverting the meaning: "Et ne Gothicus Oceano suus deesset Neptunus, ignoti nominis virgini [here he omitted the preposition 'de'] Blakulla [and he continues here on Kullen in Skåne; 'fortè Kullen in Scania, promontorium nautis peregrinis, certis ceremoniis & ritibus honoratum, ei olim sacratum') ventorum ac maris imperium concessit antiquitas." Consequently, Blakulla will in the future among certain authors be *the name* of this virgin, despite the clear original statement that she had no name.

94 Linnaeus 1741 (1962: 133), and quoted by Sahlgren 1915: 146.
95 Ljunggren 1943: 157f.
96 "In sinu memorato navigantibus, plerumqve res eveniunt adversæ, si nominaverint saltem *Kinna-Kulle*, idque hanc ob causam, ex populari judicio, qvod â Sylvanis & *Faunis* hunc locum obsideri putent, parumqve reverenter de aula sua loqventibus succenseant. Si itaqve prospero & secundo itinere in sinu navigabunt prætervehentes, collem nec adspicere, nec nominare qvidem audent. Et si aliqvando ipsum nominabunt, non *Kinna-Kulle*, sed *Kinna-Bonde*, salutent. Atque audivi hisce meis auribus, decrepitos qvosdam senes, bonâ fide narasse, qvondam præternavigantes, si de colle indigna qvædam pronunciassent, maximum facisse naufragium saxisqve ad mortem usqve fuisse petitos."
97 Fries 1989, Falck-Kjällqvist 2006.
98 Broman 1911–49: 251.
99 Rääf 1856–, 1, p. 37.
100 Tiselius 1723: 5.
101 On Tiselius 1723: Tiselius 1951: 56.
102 However, place-name specialists (cf. Jørgensen 1981) appear consistently to deny that the Danish island *Mø(e)n* could be named after a *mö*. Mø(e)n is famous for its famous chalk cliffs, *Møns klint*, visible from a long distance at sea and also supposed to be dangerous.
103 Friis 1881: 297
104 Since there is a farm called *Fenes* on it, it is possible that the original name was *Feøy*: Helland 1907–08, II: 468.
105 Friis 1881: 316.
106 Westerdahl 2013b, 2016a: passim, more specifically 2016b..
107 *Holmengråå* 1655; Westerdahl 2003: 75; from Lundahl 1970: 83.
108 Wall 1977–78, II: 123.
109 Egardt 1944: 160f.
110 Westerdahl 2010c.
111 Solheim 1940: 165.
112 Solheim 1940: 173.
113 Hovda 1941b.
114 Hovda 1941a.
115 Hovda 1961.
116 E.g. Helms 1988: 25f., and passim.
117 Here the author refers to Rediker 1987: 169. It should be pointed out that the whole chapter 4 of Marcus Rediker's book is dedicated to the mental horizons of seamen.
118 Pérez-Mallaína: 1998: 245.
119 Helms op. cit: 25.
120 Helms loc. cit. Cf. Munn 1992 (1986).
121 Henningsen 1948: 59f., 1961: 164ff.; further Holmbäck 1955.
122 Henningsen 1948, 1960, 1961. Among a few other works, reference can also be made to the more or less popular accounts by Maunier 1932, Gerds 1983 and Steusloff 1988.
123 Henningsen 1961: 211.
124 Loorits 1931, Solheim 1940.
125 Like the *hønse* names, which are mixed up with 'hens', names containing the element *Sot-* would simply be denoting the black colour of rocks, cf. e.g. Ståhle 1945. The names of larger localities, such as the peninsula *Sotenäset* in Bohuslän and *Sotasker* in the archipelago of Stockholm, known from the legend of St Olav, must be very old.
126 Cf. Löwenörn 1808 (1972): 12f.
127 Löwenörn op. cit. p. 14 with special maps.
128 E.g.Westerdahl 1994.
129 Henningsen 1961: 173.

130 Hovda 1941a.
131 Henningsen op. cit.: 180ff.
132 Henningsen loc. cit.
133 Westerdahl 1989: 190.
134 Koppmann 1876, Goetze 1975, Sauer 1996.
135 Lang 1986: map p. 51.
136 Bjørnbo and Petersen 1904.
137 Cf. Loorits 1935, Pieska 1954, Henningsen 1961, Rossi 1993.
138 Henningsen 1961: 182ff., 185ff.
139 Henningsen op. cit.: 190ff.
140 Loccenius *Antiquitates sueogothicae* 1670: 18, as quoted by Sahlgren 1915, but also including a few irrelevant observations on pagan times: "Eum [Näcken; a supernatural water being] ex prisca superstitione adhuc vulgus metuit & natantes sibi ab eo caverem, & frustulo chalybis se contra eum munire monet. Submersos autem ab eo raptos & suffocatos, fert. Hinc & illud esse videtur: quod in nonnullis fluminibus periculosa loca vectores transeuntes, nominare vulgus nauticum prohibet, ne, ut ait, procellâ vexentur & in vitæ discrimen veniant. Hæc superstitio haud dubiè inde orta est, quod in istis locis olim navigantes, in paganismo maritimum suum numen ob dictam causam quasi sacro silentio coluerunt."
141 Henningsen op. cit.: 175.
142 Henningsen op. cit.: 177.
143 As *tumisnis* on Södermanland no. 198, Mervalla, Ytterselö (Södermanlands runinskrifter 1924–36).
144 Szacherska 1981.
145 Solheim 1940: 92ff.
146 On *Helgö* names, cf. Calissendorff 1964.
147 Wennstedt 1988: 25f.; Westerdahl 2007.
148 This may be indicated by Olaus Magnus on vignettes of his *Historia de gentibus* (1555), where Blå Jungfrun in Kalmarsund and Bjuröklubb have both been furnished with a crown on the top (book 2:6, 2:23).
149 Henningsen 1948, 1961.
150 Westerdahl 1995.
151 Henningsen 1961: 15, 201ff.
152 Henningsen op. cit.: 204ff.
153 Cf. Westerdahl 2014a.
154 Morton 2001.
155 Brody 1998: 74, cf. Brody 2008.
156 Semple 1927.
157 Brody op. cit.: 41.
158 Parker 2001: 35f.
159 Presented at the conference "Ships, Saints and Sealore", Malta, 2009; Westerdahl 2014a.
160 Von Arbin 1999 in a pioneering study.
161 Cf. Hultqvist 2001: 190.
162 Stylegar 1999, 2004.
163 Solheim 1940: 14.
164 Henningsen 1960.
165 Four wrecks of various international styles, in particular two *cog*-type wrecks, earlier associated with the *Hanse* (this attribution is, however, not necessary) are dated by carbon 14 AD 1265–1385, 1410–1460, 1460 and 1520 with a wide margin. They seem to indicate at least one aspect of the later of the two great fishing periods, i.e. the fifteenth century. Cf. e.g. Nævestad 1999 (Westerdahl 2004).
166 Henningsen 1961: 15.

167 Solheim 1940, pp. 141ff., in particular p. 144.
168 Gallén 1993.
169 Solheim op. cit.: 50.
170 The firm of Lund at Farsund was already established in the late 1770s (Westerdahl 2004).
171 Henningsen op. cit.: 15.
172 E.g. Ventegodt 1982, and cf. also Crumlin-Pedersen 1981, 2000.
173 Cf. Berthelsen 1997, 1999.
174 Solheim 1940, Hovda 1941a and 1941b, Henningsen 1961.
175 Cf. Dundes 1961.
176 Henningsen 1961: passim.
177 Solheim 1940: passim.
178 Oral communication Kerstin Olson, Bohusläns museum, Uddevalla.
179 Blindleia, etc.
180 Henningsen 1961: passim.
181 Henningsen 1961: 174.
182 Solheim op. cit.: 141.
183 Solheim op. cit.: 153.
184 Solheim 1940: 165, also quoted in the introduction.
185 Cf. van Gennep 1960; further the dissertation by Henningsen 1961, Weibust 1969.
186 Cf. van Ginkel 1987: 64.
187 Cf. van Gennep op. cit.
188 This attitude is also recorded in fairly recent interviews by my colleague, Gunnar Eikli, Kristiansand.
189 Frykman 1982 (1977).
190 Homans 1941, Malinowski in Needham (ed.) 1925, Radcliffe-Brown 1933.
191 Malinowski in Needham (ed.) 1925: 32.
192 Solheim 1940: 176, cf. p. 58.
193 Solheim 1940: 173, translation by this author.
194 E.g. Poogie & Gersuny 1972, Poggie, Pollnac & Gersuny 1976, Mullen 1978. Cf. also Clark 1982, Poushinsky & Poushinsky 1973, Lummis 1983, Martin 1981. Also referred to above in the introduction.
195 Solheim 1940: 176, cf. p. 58.
196 Bråstad 1992.
197 Holm 1991.
198 Bratrein 1992.
199 Westerdahl 2003.
200 Madsén 1960: 60.
201 Westerdahl 2002b.
202 Materials ostensibly from the land would thus be favourable at sea and the other way around on land. In this case, my material suggests a reversal of what McGhee (1977) famously found among the Inuit, that only material from the sea could be used in hunting there, on the sea. This principle probably depends on the availability of such material. However, the obvious land-sea dualism precisely in Inuit culture has been treated by Zeilich-Jensen 1974 and, in the light of ANT theory, by Whitridge 2004. Cf. also Grønnow 2009.
203 Beck 1973: 28.
204 Tillhagen 1969, Toivanen 1993, 1995. Cf. de Anna 1992, cf. Valtonen 1993. The practice of sorcery among these peoples was already known in Europe by the thirteenth century AD, if not earlier.
205 Cf. Hultkrantz 1992b, who believes in an archaic backgrund, perhaps Mesolithic?

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Gegensätze in Aktion: Maritime Tabus als sozialer Faktor. Ein ethnoarchäologischer Beitrag zur maritimen Kulturforschung

Zusammenfassung

Frühneuzeitliche Quellen bieten viele Hinweise auf maritim-kulturelle Traditionen und Bräuche und die rituelle Behandlung von Ortsnamen durch nordische Fischer und Seefahrer. Während die Ausübung dieser Bräuche einerseits sehr stark mit den menschlichen Sinnen verbunden war, die sich den Quellen entziehen, fand sie andererseits Ausdruck im erfindungsreichen Gebrauch tradierter Wörter, Namen, von Sprache und Metaphern.

Dieser Beitrag beginnt mit der bisher ersten englischen Zusammenfassung und Kommentierung der Arbeit des Volkskundlers Svale Solheim, der die in der Fischerei und Schifffahrt des nordischen und baltisch-skandinavischen Raums gebräuchlichen Tabus erforschte. Anschließend wendet sich der Verfasser Solheims Vorgängern und anderen Wissenschaftlern, vor allem Linguisten, zu. Die Perspektive wird durch eine ebenfalls kommentierte Zusammenfassung einer Arbeit des Schifffahrtsethnologen Henning Henningsen erweitert, die den internationalen Brauch der Seefahrertaufe in den Blick nimmt.

Ziel ist eine neue Perspektive auf die Vorgeschichte. Der wichtigste Aspekt ist die eigentliche geographische Lage der zentralen vorgeschichtlichen Denkmäler entlang der damaligen Ufer Skandinaviens und des Baltikums: Steinritzungen aus mehreren Zeitaltern – Mittelstein- bis Früheisenzeit –, Gräber der Bronze- und Eisenzeit und schließlich küstennahe Steinlabyrinthe des Mittelalters und jüngeren Ursprungs. Geographisch scheinen diese vorgeschichtliche Verteilung und das später dokumentierte ethnologische und namenkundliche Material auf beeindruckende Weise übereinzustimmen. Aufgrund der Tatsache, dass die materiellen Überreste, auf die Bezug genommen wird, fast ausschließlich aus exakt demselben Gebiet kommen, dem auch die vermuteten völkerkundlichen Parallelen entstammen, scheinen Analogien in eminenter Weise möglich. Beide bringen eine gewisse Gegensätzlichkeit bzw. Dualität zwischen See (Wasser) und Land zum Ausdruck. Den Übergangsbereich, das Ufer, betrachtete man als ambivalenten Schwellenbereich, in dem allerhand Verwandlungen stattfanden.

Diese Grundannahme gibt Anlass zu weiteren Überlegungen – etwa zur

Deutung der wichtigsten Figuren der Steinritzungen oder zur Rolle dessen, was ich Schwellenvermittler nenne, d.h. eine Verkörperung eines der beiden Elemente bzw. einer der beiden Welten, z.B. des männlichen oder weiblichen, des Schiffs, der großen Land-, Wasser- und später auch der Haustiere. Verwandtes Verhalten religiöser oder magischer Art wurde vermutlich durch die sich verändernden gesellschaftlichen Bedingungen der Fischer und Jäger seit der Mittelsteinzeit geprägt, jedoch stets auf der Grundlage der widerstreitenden Gegensätze von See (Wasser) und Land. Der Gesamtkomplex bildet daher einen kognitiven, sensorischen, teils sogar unbewussten Aspekt der maritimen Kulturlandschaft, der in unterschiedlichen Ritualen zum Ausdruck kam. Ob aus strukturalistischem oder anderem Blickwinkel wurden die verschiedenen Thesen unabhängig voneinander aus den Quellenmaterialien abgeleitet.

Dieser Beitrag soll die enorme Vielfalt der Erscheinungsformen dieser Dualität in der Folklore vor allem im skandinavischen Kontext aufzeigen. Ein solches Unterfangen wurde bisher noch nicht gewagt. Der vorliegende Artikel gewährt zudem Einblicke in die vorgeschichtlichen Ursprünge dieser Denkweise und bietet Hinweise auf mögliche Ausgangspunkte für die Erforschung bestimmter Aspekte der Vorgeschichte, wenn auch nur in aller Kürze, da die diesbezüglich wesentlichen Vorstellungen bereits veröffentlicht worden sind.